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THE

# BRIEF REMARKER

ON THE

# WAYS OF MAN;

OR

## COMPENDIOUS DISSERTATIONS,

RESPECTING

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS AND CONCERNs,

AND THE

VARIOUS ECONOMY OF LIFE;

INTENDED, AND CALCULATED, MORE ESPECIALLY,

FOR THE USE OF THOSE IN THE COMMON RANKS

OF

AMERICAN SOCIETY.

---

BY EZRA SAMPSON.

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“ The spacious West,  
“ And all the teeming regions of the South,  
“ Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight  
“ Of knowledge, half so tempting or so fair  
“ As *Man to Man.*”

AKENSIDE.

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HUDSON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY STONE AND CORSS.

1818.

*SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, SS.*

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, That on the fifteenth day of September, in the 43d year of the Independence of the United States of America, EZRA SAMPSON, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Author and Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The BRIEF REMARKER on the WAYS OF MAN: or Compendious Dissertations respecting Social and Domestic Relations and Concerns, and the various Economy of Life; intended, and calculated, more especially for the use of those in the Common Ranks of American Society. *By Ezra Sampson.*"

"The spacious west,  
"And all the teeming regions of the south,  
"Hold not a quarry to the curious flight  
"Of knowledge, half so tempting or so fair,  
"As man to man." *Akenside.*

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "an Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JAMES DILL,  
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.  
By E. Trevor, Assistant Clerk.

## THE NEEDFUL APOLOGY.

SINCE I have explained myself so considerably at large in the last paper in this volume, the little that remains to be said by me here is *apologetical*, rather than *prefatory*.

Had it been revealed to me twenty years ago, that, at the age of about threescore and ten, I should be preparing myself to appear before the tribunal of the Public as an Author, and in a department, too, of peculiar delicacy and hazard; I should either have discredited the revelation, or been struck by it with deep dismay. Particular circumstances, of the final issue of which I had not the least forethought, have brought about this strange event.

Indeed, in former and distant years, it had sometimes occurred to me, that, essays not *scholastic*, but *practical*, written in a manner to engage general attention, and of sufficient quantity to compose a volume small and cheap, might be of special service to the public; that such a volume, replenished with the philosophy of mere plain sense in plain English,—*with coarse, homely, household truths*, which should come home to the business and bosom of community at large,—could hardly fail, if really well done, of being acceptable, and of producing salutary effects. But never did I deem my own abilities equal to such a task, nor had I ever, beforehand, the most distant thoughts of undertaking it myself.

The series of the Brief Remarker published in the Connecticut Courant, was begun by me without any expectation of extending it further than twenty numbers, or thirty at most; and fearful I was, that, ere it were carried even to that length, I should be warned, by signs of surfeit, that it was time to stop. Far beyond all my hopes, I received, and continued to receive, information, from the respectable proprietors of that paper, that my little essays were not only welcomed at the first, but continued all along to be read with interest, and were thought to have been productive of some considerable benefit to society. This encouraged me to pro-

ceed :—and fresh subjects occurring to my mind as fast as I needed them, the whole grew at last to its present bulk. Till after the publication, in that paper, of a large part of the numbers, I had no view of ever republishing them ; nor, till lately, did I come to any settled determination to do it : which final determination resulted from certain indications of public favour which I deemed clear and unequivocal, but with which I may perhaps have flattered myself too much.

And so it is, seemingly by a sort of *chance*, I find myself, at a very advanced period of life, fumbling at making a book : a book, too, quite out of the beaten track, and requiring much more vigour and nice discrimination of mind than had been possessed by me in even the best of my days. But there is no help for it now :—“ the die is cast.”

Go then, thou child of decrepit old age ; get thee gone, and now take thy luck in the world. Though often impertinent, I fear, and sometimes bordering upon the saucy,—thy whole lingo so perpetually about men and women and their little ones ; yet I do perfectly know thee for a good-meaning thing, and that thou bearest no malice in thy heart.

Into the den of the morose and snarling critic enter thou not, lest he tear thee in his anger, or trample thee in his scorn. But shun never, no *never*, the book-lumbered study of him, who casting upon thee an eye of regard, will kindly improve thy features, and mend thy manners.

Upstart, and chance-born, though thou art, much hast thou to say, and very many to bespeak. To old men and matrons—to young men and maidens—to wedded and unwedded—to householders of every description—to wives—to husbands—to parents—to children ; to all these, and to every one almost that thou meetest, in the house or by the way, thou hast sayings of thine to deliver.—So marvellously pert and forward for one of thy inches :—an ominous sign, alas, that thou hast not long to live !

HUDSON, (N. Y.) October 15, 1818.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE series of the Brief Remarker in the Connecticut Courant, was begun in the April of 1815, and was ended in the September of 1818. The generality of the papers of that series, carefully revised, and in some instances considerably enlarged, have been collected in this volume without regard to the order in which they originally stood. To these are added a number of papers never before published, and a few that had been published, though not under the same signature. As several of the papers of the Brief Remarker have a near affinity to each other as to the subject matter, and were written at periods of time far distant apart; in some instances (though only a very few I hope) the same thoughts have been repeated in nearly the same expressions; an unpleasant circumstance which I was not aware of till it was too late.

Shortly after the 19th number in this work was reprinted for it, I received an anonymous letter, post-marked, "*Oneida Castle*," and signed, "*A Catholic*," notifying me of a mistake in that particular paper in point of fact. Had the writer addressed me with even the smallest degree of decency, I should now return him my hearty thanks. But that is a sort of tribute, which, as the letter was scurillously abusive in the very last extreme, I must withhold for the present; though, with the temper and feeling of a protestant

christian, I can freely tender to him my real good wishes for his welfare. At the same time, feeling myself sacredly bound to retract any real error, whether pointed out to me fairly or never so foully, I do now readily acknowledge that Dominic (or *Saint Dominic*, if any are pleased so to call him) was not the author of the Inquisition, as I, too inadvertently, had stated: he died before the establishment of that horrible tribunal, of which the disciples of his School, *the Dominican Friars*, had the bloody charge.

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### ERRATA.

Of the following errata, some go through the whole impression, and others through only a part of it. P. 34, *so for to*—p. 71, near the bottom, *species for sex*—p. 101, *well-finished*, for *well-furnished*—p. 112, *moral for mortal*—p. 129, *wordly* for *worldly*—p. 131, *sounds, words, for sound words*—p. 153, the word “*Came*” is wanting and should precede the words, “*all his brethren*,”—p. 176, *to* is wanting between *as* and *community*—p. 181, *so many colours*, should be, *many colours*—p. 198, *et* stands for *yet*—p. 212, the title of the sixty-first number is wanting—p. 238, *is* stands for *it*, and *nor* for *not*—p. 261, *a*, stands for *at*—p. 263, *in so far as they appear*, should be, *in so far as they appear so*—p. 284, *decency*, should be *deficiency*—p. 286, *word* stands for *world*—p. 320, *your* stands for *you*—p. 354, *Learning*, conjoined, &c. should be *Literature*—p. 357, near the bottom, *at least*, should be *at last*.

Besides the above, I have discovered several instances of words misspelt—some having a letter wanting, and others, a letter, or letters, misplaced—which it is not so necessary to particularize, as every intelligent reader will easily perceive the true words intended.

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## THE BRIEF REMARKER, &c.

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### NUMBER I.

#### *On the blessing of Peace.\**

**T**IMES of general tranquillity are thought, perhaps generally, to be capable of furnishing very little for gazetteers. This is partly true, but, for the greater part, quite erroneous. Tranquil times do indeed, comparatively speaking, furnish very few astonishing incidents—very little to excite deep wonder, or to hold expectation on the rack; but of other and more useful matter they furnish a plenty. When “the world is at rest and is quiet,” it is then that those arts are best cultivated, which minister to the comfort and adornment of life; and it is then that the human family has the greatest amount of enjoyment. And though in such a state of things there is little to *amaze*, there is very much that is calculated to afford sound instruction, and to humanize and elevate the mind.

At the period of several centuries back, the ever-valorous Irish, (if we may believe Stanihurst, a very old historian) baptized their children by immersion, but

\* The publication of the Brief Remarker was begun directly after the joyful news of general peace had reached this country.

kept the right arm of the males out of the water ; alleging as the reason, that they chose to let original sin remain in that arm, so that, by means of the moral venom contained therein, it might give the more deadly blows in seasons of battle.

Be that, however, as it may, it seems clearly to be owing to human pravity, though rather in the *heart* than the arm, that we are so pleased with scenes of real and deepest distress, provided they involve not our own dear selves ;—that we hanker to enjoy the sight of an execution, and that human carnage is contemplated by us with more eagerness, if not with more satisfaction, than human weal. It is said of the wolf, that having once tasted of the blood of man he ever after prowls for it with greater ardency than for any other food. And surely it betokens somewhat of the wolfish nature, that we choose to repast our minds with relations of battles, of carnage, of wide-spread human woe, in preference to the pure intellectual food with which the state of social harmony furnishes us.

What though we no more hear of bloody battles and stupendous revolutions ? What though our ears and our eyes are no longer presented with scenes of awful magnificence ?—Is there nothing still going on in the world, that is worth hearing or seeing ? Or have we so long been accustomed to the *horrible*, that no relish is left us for the *beautiful* ? Are we quite lost to the feelings of humanity ? Is the misery of the great family to which we belong more congenial to the bent of our minds and to the feelings of our hearts, than its weal and prosperity ? In what particular have either our minds or our hearts been benefited by the ghastly tragedy, whose terrific scenes so long have been opening upon our view in rapid succession ? *Benefited* ! Rather, has it not tended to extinguish within us those kindly sympathies which are among the most amiable fea-

tures of the human character ? Did it not occasion such a degree of unnatural callousness, that we could read or hear of thousands, of scores of thousands, being slain in battle, almost without any emotion of pity or sense of sympathy ;—that, with the mind's eye, we could view with apathy, fields heaped with the dying and the dead, and imagination could calmly listen to the groans of despair bursting from myriads of bosoms at once ?

Scenes of human carnage, and, thou, blood-stained banner, avaunt ! Too long, alas, have we been steadfastly gazing on objects calculated to repress and blunt the finest sensibilities of our nature. Too long have we been accustomed to behold man acting the wolf to man.

Welcome to the earth again, thrice welcome, heaven-born Peace ! Gentle Queen, Live forever !—and here, as in the realms above, forever reside. Under thy benign auspices, see the Lamp of divine truth spreading far abroad its saving light—See Literature, the sciences, the milder arts, advancing—See the waste places repairing, new cities arising, other wildernesses blooming as the rose—See commerce binding together the sundered nations with her golden chain—See Hatred giving place to Friendship, and fell Revenge yielding to the ties of mutual interest !

It would be marvellous indeed, if from all these fine fields the Gazetteer should be unable to cull and gather enough of fruit and of flowers to entertain his customers, and more marvellous still if his customers should fastidiously reject a fare so wholesome—and so delicious, too, to any intellectual palate that is not lamentably vitiated.

## NUMBER II.

*Of the Inventions and Improvements of the present age.*

THERE are two opposite extremes in sentiment, and both productive of ill in practice: the one, a supercilious contempt of the wisdom of former ages; and the other a blind veneration for it.

Within the period of the last thirty years the world teemed with authors and admiring readers, in whose dreamy fancies a new and most sublime order of things was rising out of the chaos of the past, and to be consummated,—not through the regenerating influences of christianity, but by the omnipotence of human reason. In their wild conceptions, what had been called the light of antiquity was gross darkness, and its maxims and institutions worthy only to be swept away as vile dross. The men of all former ages they regarded as pygmies, rather entitled to scorn than veneration. The world, they thought had been all along in swaddling clothes—in the imbecility of puling infancy; but that the Age of Reason was now dawning, and men, ere long, would be as gods. Ships and ploughs would be taught to guide themselves; Balloons would supersede the necessity of horse-carriages. All old things, being the offspring of barbarian ignorance and vile prejudice, were to be done away. An end was fortunately to be put to the partition of property, to the unnatural ties of matrimony, to all peculiar affection for the children of one's own body, to all the narrow partialities arising from nearness of blood. Every heart was to embrace, in its warm affections, nothing less than the whole living world. A system of morals and customs entirely new was to be reared; a system beautiful, magnificent, lofty—reaching to heaven!

These impious fooleries having had their day, have since, with pretty general consent, been scoffed off the stage.

On the other hand, some are ever lecturing about the superior wisdom of antiquity ; as if the world were constantly retrograding rather than progressing. Now this, though not so pernicious an error as the other, is, nevertheless, an error of hurtful consequence, in as much as it tends to damp and discourage the laudable spirit of enterprize and improvement.

“ In ancient times the world was by so many ages younger and less experienced than it is in our own times”—observed the Great Chancellor Bacon, who left this stage of mortality two centuries ago but a very few years. And with the like propriety may the same observation be made now, and retorted. In Chancellor Bacon’s times (we have a good right to say) the world was by so many ages younger and less experienced than it is in our own times. Neither is there wanting the fullest evidence arising out of the progression of civil society. Deeply astonished must have been that wonderful man could he have foreseen the immense harvest of improvement already yielded from the seed, of which he was himself, as respects human agency, the principal sower.

The chequered age that ourselves live in, is, along with all its pernicious follies and heavy iniquities, an age fraught with useful discoveries, with rare inventions, and with grand designs and plans of philanthropy. This terraqueous globe, and the nations and tribes inhabiting it, are much better known now, than at any former period. Through means of new inventions we enjoy very many comforts and conveniences, of which our progenitors of all former times were destitute ; while fresh sources of knowledge are opened to us.

with regard to the customs, manners, and conditions of the various branches of the human family.

I should far exceed my proper limits were I so much as to name even an inconsiderable part of the useful inventions, discoveries, and improvements of the present age, and of which the United States of America are entitled to claim a full proportional share. Passing the generality of these over, I will mention, and merely mention, *six* grand particulars, of immense interest to Society.

1. The institution of the *Humane Society*, resulting in the reanimation of very many that were, to all appearance, within the precincts of death.

2. *Vaccination*, which has put, and is putting, a period to the awful, and formerly so extensive, ravages of the small Pox.

3. *The Lancastrian System of Education*, by means of which there are now taught in the rudiments of learning, such vast multitudes of children, who, but for the discovery of that system, must have continued utterly illiterate and ignorant.

4. *The Abolition of the African Slave Trade*—that crying sin—that master abomination of christendom—that foul and loathsome blot upon our own country.

5. The discovery of the marvellous method to give ears as it were to the *Deaf*, and tongues to the *Dumb*.

6. The astonishing diffusion of sacred and saving *truth*, by means of Bible Societies, and the recent translations of that blessed book into so many different languages, together with the apostolical labours of christian missionaries in many of the benighted regions of the earth.

What single age has ever done more, or near so much !

Not to inquire into the proximate causes of these

wonderful effects—a task requiring an abler pen—suffice it to say, “these same effects, in the natural course of things may themselves become causes producing other grand effects multiplying and extending far beyond all human foresight.” So that there is no small reason to hope that the progression of the next succeeding ages, will, under the auspices of Divine Providence, become more, and still more, extensive and rapid.

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### NUMBER III.

*Of the peculiar causes of so prevalent a restlessness of disposition.*

WHILE some ruin their circumstances by their indolence, others do it by their restlessness : always busy, but never pursuing any plan of regular industry. No sooner are they settled down in one business, than they change it for another. They are “every thing by turns, and nothing long.” Their attentions thus dissipated, turn to no account ; and poverty overtakes them whilst they are flying so many different ways to escape it. Whereas a steady straight-forward course, in almost any single business, might have secured them a competence.

It is neither an imaginary nor a rare character, that I have now been describing : it is to be met with every where in town and country. Thousands are undone by means of this single foible ; every thing else in their habits and dispositions giving promise of success.

This restlessness is owing sometimes to natural temper, but most commonly, perhaps, to the peculiar circumstances of the country in which we live. In China, a boy must follow the occupation of his father, and

stick to that or starve. In India, no one can raise himself above the level of the *Caste* in which he happens to be born. Nor is the mass of Europeans altogether free from shackles that bind them down to occupations in which their own choice has had no concern. If a man there be bred a cobler, he hardly may aspire to the honour of making shoes. But *here*, on the other hand, a man may put off his calling almost as easily as his clothes ; or he may patch together several callings, and pursue them alternately, or all at once, as best suits his own fancy. Here, the field of individual enterprise is alike open to all. Here, no one is of a family so humble as to be precluded from the possibility of raising himself not only to opulence, but to office and rank. Here, wealth is shifting hands with such rapidity that, in one or two generations, the Hills sink, and the Vallies rise.

Now, as this condition of things animates thousands, with the spirit of enterprise, so it occasions, in very many, a restlessness and instability of feeling. Possessing freedom of choice, and having before them so many objects to choose betwixt, they never come to an election that fully satisfies them.—Add to this, that the last twenty-five years have, (by reason of the unexampled state of Europe) furnished instances, in almost every district of our country, of some or other rising suddenly to great opulence, by a single stroke in the experiments of speculation, and without any attention at all to the process of patient industry.—A circumstance that has operated powerfully on young minds, and on minds not young, in rendering them dissatisfied with slow gains or small profits, and impatient of the drudgery of any laborious calling. Not to mention that our country has, of itself, for a very long time past, furnished magnificent scenes and numerous op-

portunities of speculation, altogether unexampled perhaps in the history of man.

Moreover, it is obvious to remark, that our enterprising youth, are necessarily, as it were, tinctured, with a romantic disposition. The books that they most read are of the romantic kind ; alike inflaming the imagination and misleading the judgment, by descriptions " of a world of wonders where events are produced by causes widely and manifestly different from those which regulate the course of human affairs." Also, for almost the term of a whole generation, there has been constantly exhibited to view such a series of marvels in the civilized world, that the history of real life carries on it the appearance of romance.

Nothing very strange is it therefore, that the minds of a great many are unsettled, notional, and fraught with extravagant expectations ; and this is the less to be wondered at, as it is customary for our youth to step into manhood earlier than in former ages, or perhaps than in any country else. Commencing men at an immature period, and under such powerful impulses to wild extravagances of imagination, it would be marvellous indeed if they were not, many of them, averse to any sober, rational and steady plan of life.

To contrast the past with the present—in a short biographical notice of one of the first and wealthiest merchants of the last age, the writer remarks :—" It was an invariable rule with him to avoid every kind of dangerous experiment and to confine himself to such branches of trade as admitted the surest principles of calculation."—This golden rule of business, which in former times of " steady habits," was sacredly regarded, not merely by *that* merchant, but generally ;—this golden rule of business, has, by a concurrence of unparalleled circumstances, been made to give place to rashness of speculation and a restless spirit of ad-

venture. An evil which nothing but length of time and the smart-giving rod of stern experience, will, in any likelihood, be able to cure.

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## NUMBER IV.

*Of troubles of our own making.*

THERE is in our nature such a restlessness of disposition, that we commonly make to ourselves more than half the evils we feel. Unsatisfied with what we are, or possess, we are still craving after something past or to come, and by regrets, desires, and fears, are perpetually poisoning the streams of present enjoyment. The weather is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. If we have nothing to do, time hangs upon us as an insupportable burden. If our circumstances compel us to daily labour, we fret to see others enjoying their leisure. Although we have food and raiment enough, and good enough, still we are dissatisfied that we are not rich. If, on the contrary, we chance to be rich, the weight of cares, the pains of getting, the difficulty of keeping, and the fears of losing, give us incessant disquiet and fatigue.

Mrs. Thrift has a decent competence, together with a kind husband and fine children ; but her heart is sick because she can't live in the splendid style of her wealthy neighbour Mrs. Modish : at the same time Mrs. Modish, yoked to a surly, snappish, gouty husband, is secretly envying the condition of Mrs. Thrift.

Honest Abraham has a good farm, and is an excellent farmer, and free of debt, but the peace of his mind is destroyed by being disappointed of an office ; an office too without emolument. Farmer Thomas, his

more artful neighbour who got the office, no sooner received his commission than he began to dash away like a gentleman, and, consequently, neglected his farm and impoverished his family ; and by this time he sincerely regrets his having been so foolish as to barter solid pudding for empty honour.

Mercator, having acquired a snug estate by trade, grows uneasy, and sighs for a country life. Purling brooks, vocal groves, fragrant meadows, blooming orchards and fields covered with a golden harvest, enchant his imagination. He sells his stock in trade and purchases a farm ; which he manages with about as much skill as a mere landman would manage a ship at sea : it brings him in debt ; and, venting upon it no very gentle epithets, he longs to leave it, and go back to the situation he had abandoned.

Agricolum, weary of a dull plodding way of living and of slow gains, leaves the plough and becomes a merchant. He sells his fast estate and purchases with it goods ; running in debt a few thousands, as he would needs have a handsome assortment. His goods are unskilfully chosen, and meet with a wretched market. Pay-day comes, and his creditors, blest with excellent memories, are prompt in urging him to a settlement ; but, Alas ! of money he has none. And now, " to break, or not to break, that's the question." He struggles hard, makes new debts to pay old ones, sells at great loss, borrows money at 30 or 40 per cent, but breaks at last ; and whereas he merely *imagined* himself unhappy while holding the plough, he now *feels* that he is so indeed.

Thus mankind, from a restless disposition, render themselves wretched when they might be much at their ease.

It would be worth to one, more than any, or even all, the arts and sciences, *to learn the art of living happily.*

I don't mean *perfect* happiness, which is not to be enjoyed here; but such a degree of happiness as our Maker has put in our power. The art of living happily does not lie in stoical apathy; for as to the real and sharp afflictions of life, while one ought "to *bear* them like a man, he should also *feel* them like a man." Nor does *he* know the sweets of friendship, who feels little or no pain at being sunder'd from a near friend. Much less does it lie in the nauseating lap of gross sensuality; for the enjoyment of the mere sensualist is no higher than that of the pampered horse in the stable or stud, or the fattening pig in the sty. Indeed the brute has much the advantage, as it lives according to its nature and destination, while the man is haunted with a perpetual consciousness of the shameful degradation of his moral and intellectual faculties.

The following maxims or rules of action might, if strictly observed, go far to increase the happiness, or at least, to diminish the inquietudes and miseries of life.

Live constantly in the unshaken belief of the over-ruling Providence of an infinitely wise and good, as well as Almighty Being; and prize his favour above all things.

Observe, inviolably, truth in your words, and integrity in your actions.

Accustom yourself to temperance, and be master of your passions.

Be not too much out of humour with the world; but remember, 'tis a world of God's creating, and however sadly it is marred by wickedness and folly, yet you have found in it more comforts than calamities, more civilities than affronts, more instances of kindness toward you than of cruelty.

Try to spend your time usefully both to yourself and others.

Never make an enemy, or lose a friend, unnecessarily.

Cultivate such an habitual cheerfulness of mind and evenness of temper as not to be ruffled by trivial inconveniences and crosses.

Be ready to heal breaches in friendship and to make up differences ; and shun litigation yourself, as much as possible ; for he is an ill calculator who does not perceive that one amicable settlement is better than two law suits.

Be it rather your ambition to acquit yourself well in your proper station, than to rise above it.

Despise not small honest gains, nor risk what you have on the delusive prospect of sudden riches. If you are in a comfortable thriving way keep in it, and abide in your own calling rather than run the chance of another.

In a word, mind to "use the world as not abusing it," and probably you will find as much comfort in it as is most fit for a frail being, who is merely journeying through it toward an immortal abode.

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## NUMBER V.

### *Of self-inflicted tortures.*

NOTHING is more common than the discontent of those who have not even a shadow of cause for discontent. They are neither sick, nor pinched with poverty, nor called to sustain distressing hardships. They enjoy both food and appetite. They have raiment to put on, and friends to converse with ; and if not rich, have fully enough for the moderate supply of all their real wants : yet these enjoyments, these bounties of

indulgent heaven, are poisoned as it were by the discontent of their minds, so that they are wretched amidst health and competence.

What are the illusions that thus obstruct the sources of enjoyment, and, in this favoured country cheat so many men and women out of the happiness of which Providence had put them in possession?—They are such as usually spring from one or other of the three following causes—Perverseness of Temper—False theories of worldly happiness—the influence of opinion.

With respect to enjoying ourselves well or ill in life, a great deal more depends upon Temper than upon circumstances. Not but that our enjoyments are always considerably affected by our worldly circumstances and sometimes in a very great degree; but if they are such that we are able to supply ourselves with all the real necessities and essential comforts of life, it is not our *circumstances*, but our *tempers* that are in fault, if we are not too happy to complain and too grateful to repine. The root of our uneasiness is altogether in our own minds, and without a thorough change *there*, no change of place or of outward circumstances could quiet us. What though all our present *ideal* wants were satisfied? Other ideal wants would presently start up, and we should still be weaving for ourselves the web of misery. A temper that inclines to be satisfied with its present lot, is worth more than thousands a year; whereas utter restlessness of temper is one of the greatest of misfortunes. A full half of human troubles would vanish, and the rest be lightened, if there were a thorough cure of this one scrofulous disease of the heart.

Our False Theories of worldly happiness constitute another huge class of troubles of our own making: and the effects of these false theories are the more deplorable, inasmuch as the disappointments inevitably result-

ing from them sour the disposition, and thereby enhance the numbers of the wretched victims of temper. Corporeal enjoyments are few and simple: neither wealth, nor any of the arts of refinement, can add considerably to their number, or any thing at all to their relish. The pleasures of sense are limited by narrow boundaries which never can be passed without instantly turning pleasure into pain: and however much we may refine upon the pleasures of sense, our refinements can increase them but very little. The most refined epicure, for example, has scarcely any more enjoyment of the pleasures of the table, than one who confines himself to the plainest viands. Wherefore nothing is more plain and easy of comprehension than the true notion of mere worldly happiness:—the whole sum of it results from Health, Competence, the friendly Society of neighbours and acquaintance, and the pure joys of Domestic Life. He that has these, though he have neither wealth nor rank, enjoys about all the world can bestow. But these real and unsophisticated enjoyments, which are bestowed in fully as large measure upon the peasant as upon the prince, are too vulgar for the fastidious taste of visionary speculatists: they must find a something that is quite above and beyond the blessings common to Adam's children, else they are determined not to enjoy themselves at all. Thus they lose the good that lies fairly within their reach, by laying out their endeavours to grasp an abstract something, that is conceivable indeed, but not attainable—an *Ignis Fatuus*, which the eye plainly sees, but which evades the touch and baffles all pursuit.

The last brood of artificial troubles which I proposed to notice, are those that are generated by the influence of Opinion: I mean not one's own opinion, but the opinion of others. We are such strange and unaccountable creatures, that we are more solicitous to appear

happy than really to be so ; and hence we willingly abridge our real enjoyments for the sake of seeming to possess enjoyments superior to those that are altogether common to mankind. Now the general opinion of society (a very erroneous one indeed) makes the pomp of show a prerequisite for being deemed happy, or at least for obtaining the credit of *refined* enjoyment ; and this general opinion, how much soever we may despise it in our judgments, has an astonishing influence upon our conduct and our feelings : an influence that precipitates hundreds and tens of hundreds from a condition of competence to that of poverty.

That *apt* Remarker, Dr. Franklin, observes, “ The eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture.”—It is even so : and it is this supreme regard to the eyes of others, that leads multitudes into extravagant and ruinous expenses. Without adequate funds, they build them fine houses and purchase them fine furniture and array themselves with costly apparel, that others may gaze upon them as persons possessed of taste and of refined enjoyments : and by these means they are presently stripped of the very necessities of life.

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## NUMBER VI.

*Of greedy ambitiousness after wealth—ominously the master passion of the times.*

AMBITION’s thorny path is too narrow for two to go abreast. Each struggles hard to get forward of each ; and the one that is foremost of all must press onward with might and main, else some other will rush by

him. He that stumbles is trampled over by the crowd behind him. It is all a scramble, in which the successful competitors are greeted with shouts of applause, and the unsuccessful ones assailed with the hisses of derision and scorn.

In a former age it was the ambition of the celebrated Cardinal de Retz, to be first in the hearts of his fellow citizens the Parisians. His munificence exceeded all former example : his liberalities were unbounded. The courtesy of his manners and the fascinating charms of his address, won him universal friendship and admiration. At home he was crowded with visitors ; when he rode through the streets he was accompanied with a splendid retinue of nobility and gentry, all proud to do him honour ; and whenever he entered the parliament, marked respect and homage were paid him there.

But there happened an incident that put this friendship to the test, and proved it light as air. Upon a time, the Cardinal was thought to be on the eve of ruin. In that situation he went to the parliament, to clear himself of heavy charges which his enemies had raised against him ; and the account of his reception there is thus given in his *Memoirs* written with his own hand.

“ We went to the parliament. The princes had there near a thousand gentlemen with them ; and I may say hardly one from the court was missing there. I was in my church habit, and went through the great hall with my cap in my hand, saluting every body ; but I met with but few that returned me that civility, so strongly was it believed that I was an undone man.”

Neither is this a solitary example, nor one of rare occurrence. History abounds with examples, that in the falling fortunes of the great and noble of the earth,

their friends fall off like leaves from the trees in the first frosts of autumn. Sir Walter Raleigh, alike celebrated as a scholar, a gentleman, a statesman, a soldier, and a man of genius, in his last letter to his wife after his most unjust condemnation to death, says, “ To what friend to direct you I know not ; for all mine have left me in the true time of need.”

But not any longer to dwell on the scenes of high life, with which the generality of my readers have as little concern as myself, I will turn, now, to the walks of the more common sort.

In countries where distinction of orders is established by law, ambition runs in two different channels. With not a few, its main object is rank, titles, stars, garters, and ribbands ; these baubles being by them preferred greatly to mere wealth, which is eagerly pursued by those chiefly who can have little or no expectation of attaining to the high distinctions of civil, ecclesiastical, or military rank. Whereas in this free country of ours, where there is no distinction of orders and no established rank of one family above another, the undivided current of ambition is towards wealth. Avarice is the general and the ruling passion. The pursuit of gain is the only secular pursuit that is much valued or thought of ; because, in the common estimation, the grand point of honour is to be rich. Mammon is the idol, to which every thing else is made to bend. Offices are sought after for their emoluments chiefly. Nay, the august seats of legislation are unhesitatingly deserted for public employments barren of honour, but of greater profit. Men are appraised, and rated high or low, according to the magnitude of their property. The common question, *What is he worth ?* Is answered only in one way. If his estate be small, he is worth but little ; if he have no estate left, he is worth nothing. It is but of small account though he

have an ample fund of moral and intellectual worth ;— the worth that is most eagerly sought, most highly prized, and most generally esteemed, is pecuniary worth.

In the scramble of such multitudes after riches, very many must needs be unsuccessful : for in no country whatever can more than a comparative few arrive to wealth. By far the greater part of the candidates, falling short of their expectations, endure the pangs of disappointment, and pine under the corrodings of envy. With some, avarice defeats its own aim. Their greediness of gain, if it impel them not to deeds of fraud or violence which bring them to shame and ruin, yet it spurs them on to engage in rash and ruinous adventures. The estates of others, as Franklin's Poor Richard said, *are spent in the getting*.—Fondly anticipating a fortune, they dash away as if they really had it in hand. Others again, counterfeit the splendor of riches, that they may put themselves and their families in the ranks of honour. For as long as a family can keep up the appearance of wealth by whatever means, so long is it accounted a *good* family, and so long is it entitled to the privilege of alliance with *good* company. But if it have fallen from these appearances, it had better, in the eye of fashion, have fallen from grace. Whatever of estimable and amiable qualities such a family may possess, it fares, with its former visitors and familiars, as the Cardinal did with his, at the time he was thought *an undone man*.

Industry, Frugality, and Thrift, are *republican virtues* ; but a scrambling for money as the chief good, is of bad omen. It produces meanness of sentiment and sordidness of disposition. A free people, whose passions are set altogether on the pursuit of gain, can hardly remain free very long ; because the necessary consequence of such a spirit of avarice, is fraud in pri-

vate life, and venality and corruption in the higher departments.

An able author, while treating incidentally of the fall of the Roman republic, remarks :—“ The course that a free nation runs, is from virtuous industry to wealth ; from wealth to luxury ; from luxury to an impatience of discipline and corruption of morals ; till by a total degeneracy and loss of virtue, being grown ripe for destruction, it falls at last a prey to some hardy oppressor, and with the loss of liberty, loses every thing else that is valuable.\*

\* Dr. Middleton on the Life of Cicero.

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## NUMBER VII.

*Of the tyranny of Fashion in laying enormous taxes upon common-conditioned folks, and grinding the faces of the poor.*

EVERY one who reads English history must know, that Richard the Third had a humped back. And, as ancient story goes, *humping* became quite fashionable during his reign : the courtiers, the Lords, the Ladies, and the under gentry, patterning after royalty, wore, each, a fashionable crook in the back : so that the English of that day were “ a crooked generation,” sure enough. Be this, however, as it may, in point of ridiculous absurdity it hardly exceeds what is very commonly seen among ourselves.

Though we fain would be called a christian people, it is a fact, as notorious as sad, that an antichristian deity is worshipped among us in town and country, and by immense numbers of all classes and of both

sexes. Look where you will, you see all ranks bowing, cringing, bending the knee—to *what?* to *Fashion*. This is the goddess of their idolatry. They yield implicit obedience to her laws, however absurd and barbarous; and though she changes as often as the moon, they follow her in all her changes, and ape her in all her freaks—*humping whenever she humps*. They are brought to endure cold and nakedness, when, but for having followed her mandates, they might be comfortably clad. They reject and despise the diet which she forbids, though wholesome and palateable, and best suited, as well to their constitutions as to their circumstances. They pay tythes to her of all they possess. *Tythes* did I say? It were well if only a *tenth* would satisfy her: she often claims even more than one half. Did she tax only the rich, who are able to pay, it would be not so bad; but she lays her rapacious hands on the middling classes, and even upon the poor. Nay, the knavish huzzy seizes what ought to be laid up against old age and sickness, and also what ought to go to the creditor.

By the decree of fashion, this republican, and otherwise free nation, is thrown into *castes*, as really, in some respects, as the east Indians have been by their brahmins; and the only way to gain admission, or maintain a standing, in the higher *castes*, is to dress gorgeously and fare sumptuously, no matter by what means. Hence the general struggle. The rich march foremost in the ranks of fashion, and the others keep as close to their heels as possible, following on, in a long train, like files of geese. This is *comic* in appearance, but *tragic* in reality. It is amusing at first thought, to see families in narrow circumstances struggling to make the appearance of high life; to see them vying not only with one another but with the rich, to exceed in finery and splendor; to see how much pains

they take and how many arts they use, to dazzle the eyes of the beholder with the mockery of wealth. But on due reflection, one finds more reason to be sad than merry.—When we consider that these deluded people are following a phantom that is leading them to ruin, that they are incurring expenses which they are utterly unable to support, that they are bartering away solid comforts for an empty show, that by striving to live splendidly they are losing the means of living decently and comfortably; when we consider that they are bringing wretchedness upon their children, by leaving them to the buffetings of poverty, aggravated highly by their early acquaintance with fashionable life; when we consider, finally, that some of them are defrauding their creditors by sacrificing upon the altar of fashion what is needed for the payment of their just debts;—when we put these considerations together, we find them enough so excite deep regret and sorrow.

It is questionable whether great wealth conduces, on the whole, even to wordly happiness. It cannot cure an aching head, nor sooth an aching heart; it is no shield from the shafts of misfortune, nor from the arrows of death; it brings to the possessor an addition of cares as well as of comforts, and is often the means of bringing moral ruin upon his children; and while it increases his power and influence, it increases also his responsibility.—The rich have, however, one exclusive privilege: they have a right to make a splendid appearance in the world, because their circumstances can well afford it. Fine houses, expensive furniture, stately equipage, and sumptuous fare, are within the bounds of their real means, and therefore not censurable in *them*. In one point of view the profusion of their expenses is beneficial to community, as it gives employment and affords sustenance to industry. Yet there

can be shown *a more excellent way*.—Frugality is comely even in the rich. Not *that* frugality which degenerates to parsimony, and causes the rich to wear the garb of poverty, from a sordid spirit of penuriousness; nor yet that frugality which saves merely to increase a hoard of wealth already too large; but it is a prudent saving from the grasp of profusion for the purpose of charity and beneficence.—Take the following example :

Benevolus has both largeness of wealth and largeness of heart. Content with his present wordly store, he is now resolved that his expenses shall about equal his income. He lives daily in the style of affluence, but never in the style of extravagance: and what he saves by frugality, he bestows in charity. To the children of misfortune and want, he is a friend and a father; of every useful and laudable undertaking he is a bountiful encourager.—Does Benevolus aspire to be a leader of  *fashion* ? Yes: with all the weight of his influence he tries to make industry, prudent economy, and frugality, fashionable; to make the moral and christian virtues fashionable; to make it fashionable to behave well, and to do good.—Happy man ! happy the children of such a father, and the community that has such a pattern !

As the richest families may be beggared by extravagance, much sooner will it consume one's all, when that all is but little:—and what avails the ruffle without the shirt?—Persons who are but in small circumstances, must prudently husband what they have, or it will quickly slip out of their hands. How unwise is it for *them* to make an ostentation of wealth which they do not possess, or to pursue fashion “when she runs faster than they can follow?”—Many have smarted for this species of folly already. Many thousands, by standing on tiptoe and reaching after things too high

for them, have fallen flat to the ground. Many thousands are now suffering the pangs of want, who might have lived comfortably all their days, had they never attempted to live in fashionable splendor. Let their misfortune warn others against their imprudence. If you follow fashion beyond your real means, depend upon it the skittish jade will throw you into the mire at last.

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## NUMBER VIII.

*Of the papal rescript from the Court of Fashion, indirectly forbidding to marry.*

THE injunction of celibacy, or of the monastic life, by the Romish Church, being directly in opposition to the order and ordination of nature, has, more than any other single cause whatever, produced a huge mass of evils, both moral and physical, in those countries that have been under the papal dominion ; evils too obvious to need pointing out, and too flagitious, some of them, to name. With prophetic reference, as we protestants fully believe, to the doings of that corrupted church, St. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, expresses himself as follows : “ Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons.”—And immediately after he particularizes the unnatural and monstrous rescript, *Forbidding to marry*, as of the same infernal family, or nearly allied with, the doctrines of demons, aforesaid.

If, however, there were no *forbidding to marry*, ex-

cept in the Romish Church, we might hope that a full cure of the deadly evil is at hand : since *Old Grey Beard*, as a French satirist used to call the Pope, is become too impotent, much longer to impose a law, at which all the genuine feelings of nature revolt.† But this diabolical prohibition, to wit, *forbidding to marry*, has been enjoined and enforced even more extensively in one other way, than it ever was by the canons of the Vatican.—I will explain my meaning by sketching a fragment of ancient history.

The ancient Romans were Republicans after their kind, and continued such for a considerable number of centuries. Though they were pagan idolaters, and their worship was deplorably corrupt, yet, previous to their imbibing the atheism of Epicurus, they generally believed in a future retribution of rewards and punishments ; which belief operated so powerfully upon them, that they were truly exemplary in some few of the social virtues. In particular, perjury was scarcely known among them, and infidelity in the connubial state was no less uncommon,

The Roman republicans were plain men and women, accustomed to daily labor, and quite unaccustomed to finery of apparel or luxury of living. A Roman of even noble blood tilled his little field with his own hands, and was proud of tilling it with superior industry and skill ; whilst his lady, if lady she might be called, made it her chief ambition to be an excellent house-wife. While this state of things lasted, and a very long while it did last, the Romans were eager enough to get themselves wives. They married generally, and they married young : for they thought, and well they might, that whoso found a wife, found a good

\* At the time when this paper was written there could have been no expectation of the restoration of the Pope.

thing—a real helpmeet, as well as a dear and faithful companion. And what is singularly remarkable if true, it is recorded by a Roman historian, that there had not been known, in the city of Rome, a single instance of divorce during the whole space of five hundred years ; though the law had put it in the power of the husband to repudiate his wife almost at pleasure.

Unfortunately for the Roman republic, and more especially for the female part of it, a great and splendid event quite changed the morals, the taste, the habits, and the whole face of the country. One hundred and ninety years before the christian era, the Romans, for the first time, entered into Asia with an army, which under Scipio defeated and conquered Antiochus the Great of Syria : and from thence they brought home such a taste for the luxuries of the East, as promoted and hastened the ruin of their commonwealth ; and in no way more directly, than by a practical *forbiddance of marriage*.

The Roman women, once so plain, frugal and industrious, became enamoured of the costly finery that was brought from the East. One of them, named Lullia Paulina, when dressed in all her jewels, is said to have worn to the value of three hundred and thirty two thousand pound sterling. And though this was the most extraordinary instance of the time, yet it is reasonable to suppose that, of the rest of the ladies, every one strove to get as near the top of the fashion as she could : and that, with all the females who thought any thing of themselves, the rage was to be fine and fashionable.

This new order of things, while it precipitated the republic down the abyss of ruin, brought marriage almost into disuse : insomuch that Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, finding among the men a general disinclination to marry, was fain to pass severe penal laws, to force them as it were into the marriage bonds. But

it was all to little purpose. Despot and tyrant as he was, he found it as impossible to compel the bachelors to marry, as Peter the first long since did, to compel the Russians to shave off their beards. Was it owing to the *licentiousness* of the men? Considerably it was, no doubt; but not altogether. It was partly owing to their *prudence*. A Roman bachelor naturally enough would commune with himself thus:—"These extravagant flirts, of whose attire a single article costs more than one of them would earn in her whole lifetime, are fit only for show. I like mighty well to be in their company at routs and assemblies; but the gods save me from a union with them! If I marry, unless she bring me a fortune, she will quickly devour mine. Wherefore I will look out only for *number one*, in spite of the edicts of the Emperor."

Consider, ye AMERICAN FAIR, that, in all times and countries the like causes will produce the like effects.

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## NUMBER IX.

*On the elevation of the condition and character of women by means of christianity.*

In all ages of the world, the greatest portion of sorrow and hardship has fallen to the lot of the female part of our race. Amongst all the numerous tribes of savages and barbarians, in whatever quarter of the earth, or in the islands of the seas, females are despised and degraded, and a wife is but little better conditioned than a bond slave. "While the man passes his days in idleness and amusement, the woman is condemned to incessant toil. Tasks are imposed upon her without mercy, and services are received without complacence or gratitude." The laws and customs of

Mahomedism, as well as of Paganism, degrade and enslave the women : a degradation and slavery of vast extent ; since by far the greater numbers of the human kind are either Mahomedans or Pagans.

It is only in christian countries that women rise to their proper rank, and are treated as companions and equals. For this happy improvement in their condition they are indebted to christianity, which, as well by humanizing and purifying the heart, as by the prohibition of polygamy, has loosed the bonds of their captivity, and at the same time adorned them with virtues the most estimable and amiable.

The New Testament is the great charter of the rights of women ; and not only the great charter of their rights, but the unerring directory of their duties, and the choice cabinet as it were of their most precious ornaments. As the benevolent system of christianity frees them from vassalage and exalts their rank in society, so it inspires them at the same time with a taste for what is morally excellent and virtuous and lovely. Nor is it a little remarkable, that, of the religion which so ennobles their sex, they are the first, the most general, and among the most effectual teachers. It is from women that almost *our* whole sex, as well as *theirs*, receives its earliest instruction in religion and morality. Though they are neither missionaries abroad nor preachers at home, yet, as spreaders and promulgators of christianity, they are hardly less useful than those venerable orders of men. Throughout all christendom, as preceptresses, as mothers, and in their various domestic relations, they have the moulding of the minds of future men as well as of future women, during those infantile years in which the mind is comparable to soft wax, and when the impressions which are made upon it are the most indelible. So that it would not perhaps be extravagant to believe, that a

full half of the whole christianized world has been christianized, or first imbued with christian principles, by means of female teachers.

Nothing scarcely admits of clearer proof from history, than that the institutions for alleviating human misfortune and distress have grown out of the christian religion ; and nothing surely could confer greater dignity on the female sex, than its active and zealous co-operation in establishing and supporting such plans of general philanthropy.

All along, from the first age of christianity down to latter times, there have been women highly distinguished for their pious benevolence and active beneficence ; but not having learned to form themselves into societies for joint acts of charity, their solitary or individual efforts could afford relief to but few. For the present illustrious epoch in the christianized world has been reserved the honour of multiplying and extending, far beyond all former examples, humane plans and institutions : among which *The Female Benevolent and Beneficent Societies* are entitled to a conspicuous rank. Multiplied as they have been, and multiplying as they are likely still to be, no tongue can tell, no heart conceive, the benefits of the little streamlets issuing in such innumerable directions from this single source. Benefits not only to the *Receivers*, but also to the *Givers* ; for it is even “ more blessed to give than to receive.” The occupations of charity nourish and strengthen some of the best feelings of the heart, and at the same time are rewarded with the enjoyment of a higher pleasure than the hoards of wealth, or its pageantries, can ever bestow.

“ What wonders and what pleasures has civilization procured to mankind !” So the philosopher exclaims, and not without reason. The civilized man possesses manifold more enjoyments, and stands vastly higher in

the scale of human beings, than the naked savage, or the rude barbarian. But it is not mere civilization, nor mere learning, that has imbued the heart with the genuine feeling of humanity. See, on the page of history, only fifteen centuries back, the ladies of Rome, that proud mistress of the world : see them seated in the amphitheatre, as delighted spectators of the mortal combats of gladiators ; feasting their eyes with the bloody carnage, and their ears with the groans of the dying. And now, see, on the other hand, tens and hundreds of thousands of females of the present age, formed into societies for the alleviation of human distress ; for the purpose of ministering to the widow, of sustaining the orphan, of clothing the naked, of feeding the hungry, of “healing the broken and weak.” Behold these objects of striking contrast ; and remember that the former had quite as much of polish, as much of elegance, and as much of learning, as the latter. And what is it then, but the influence of christian principles, that has made such an astonishing difference between them in point of taste and sensibility ?

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## NUMBER X.

*Of self-ignorance and self-adulation.*

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“ The nature of mankind is such,  
To see and judge of the affairs of others  
Much better than their own.”

THE above-cited sentiment has not abated of its force, nor is it the less applicable to human nature at the present instant, though two thousand years have passed away since it came from the pen of *Terence*, the poet of Carthage.

In one respect, very few, if any, are altogether free from the imputation of making use of deception. It is

one of the strange properties of our fallen nature, that we deceive ourselves even more easily than we are deceived by others ; and that though we are mightily offended when others deceive us, we are pleased with the deception which we palm upon ourselves. We love flattery, because it enables us to flatter ourselves, and we dislike honest reproof or censure, because it impels us to fix our eyes upon our own faults or frailties. We weigh our own actions, and the actions of others, not in the same balance, or else with different kinds of weights. We judge ourselves and our neighbours by different rules, which always gives the advantage to our own side. Imperfect we readily confess ourselves to be ; but if one happen to impute to us any particular imperfection, we deem ourselves insulted, and instantly take fire. Mortal we know we are, and yet seem scarcely to expect either death or sickness ; for these events, perhaps for the most part, come unawares. Peradventure there is not one *well* man in a hundred but secretly thinks the fatal arrow is more likely to hit almost any body else than himself. The young confidently expect they shall live to be old ; and the old, who have already seen one generation pass away, are not without hopes that they shall survive the greater part of another. The mass of mankind are, in short, perpetually deluding themselves one way or other ; nor are the wisest and the best, quite free in all respects from self-delusion. Perhaps if life were not in any wise gilded by the enchanting power of imagination, there would be little relish for most of those things which God hath given us to enjoy under the sun.

A very ancient writer has told us of a poor labourer who fancying himself a king repaired daily to a hillock, where, as on his throne, he sat in state, and exercised regal authority over the imaginary subjects that surrounded him ; who being at length cured of that please-

ing error of the imagination, complained hard of his doctors that they had physicked him back again to poverty. Nor is he a solitary instance. The most of mankind, in some period or other of their lives, have perhaps indulged vagaries of the imagination quite as groundless, if not quite so extravagant ; and which, if they led them not astray from either duty or prudence, did them benefit, by sweetening their toils and smoothing the path of life. The illusions of Hope, which no sooner is disappointed than it springs anew in the human breast, constitute a large portion of the earthly happiness of mankind, and is the main spring of their exertions in worldly affairs.

“ Dream after dream ensues—  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed.”

However, speaking of worldly good only, their dreams afford them more satisfaction than they ever find in realities.

But when the illusion relates to the moral qualities of our hearts, flattering us that our vices are virtues, or at least that they are the less culpable for being ours ; it is then that it is pregnant with infinite mischief.

Of all human knowledge, Self-knowledge is accounted the most difficult of attainment ;—and why ? Assuredly, it is not so very difficult in itself. We are conscious not only of our own actions, but also of the views and motives by which we are actuated. The thoughts and affections of our hearts are all open to our own inspection. Why then is it hard for one so far to know himself as to be able to pencil his own true picture with considerable exactness ? The main difficulty arises from the blinding and deluding bias that we have toward ourselves. It is by reason of this kind of sophistry, that though we discern the *mote* in the eye of another, we perceive not the *beam* in our

own ; that though we are clear-sighted quite enough with respect to the faults of our neighbors, we are purblind as moles in regard to as great, or even greater faults in ourselves ; that, at best, we weigh our own with more than some *grains* of allowance, but those of every one else excepting our particular friends, without any allowance at all, finally, to the same cause it is owing, that we magnify into shining virtues such deeds of our own doing, as we should think but lightly of if done by persons in whom we had no particular interest.

The sophistry with which we cheat ourselves runs into our social intercourse and our dealings. In estimating the characters of those about us, we are apt to judge of them according to the particular bearings they have to our own dear selves. If they are near of kin, or close friends, our favouritism blinds us to their frailties, and magnifies, in them, every thing that has the appearance of excellence ; but if they are aliens from our hearts, we are apt enough to judge them with all that severity which appearances can any ways justify. So, too, in matters of deal, it is a hard thing indeed for one to determine right in one's own cause ; the opposite positions of *mine* and *thine*, not unfrequently swaying men of honest intentions. For which reason it is, that in all the intercourse and business of life, the frequent use or application of the *golden rule* is, in point of morals, of such immeasurable importance ; since, in innumerable cases, it is only by changing places, *ideally*, with those we have concers or deal with, that we can know exactly how to do them justice.

And not only is the daily application of that divine rule so necessary in all our business, but it is alike necessary in the management of conflicting opinions. *The free exercise of private judgment*, is what every man claims for himself, and yet almost every man grudges it to others. And hence it is, that disputes of

opinion are so commonly acrimonious. Whereas, if we were no less willing that others should enjoy the free exercise of private judgment than to enjoy it ourselves, our disputes would be conducted with fairness, and good temper.

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## NUMBER XI.

*Of the wide difference between Wisdom and Cunning.*

IN one of the tragedies of Sophocles there is an admirable *Moral*, couched under the veil of heathen fable.

Philoctetes, to whom Hercules had bequeathed his bow and arrows, went, along with the other princes and chiefs of Greece, to the siege of Troy. He was son of the renowned Achilles, and no less distinguished for his valour than his birth. But having been bit by a serpent, an incurable and most painful ulcer ensued ; and his perpetual groans and lamentations disturbed and disheartened the whole Grecian camp. For this reason the chief of that military confederacy, had him conveyed to Lemnos, a desolate island, where he remained ten years, alone, and in intolerable anguish. At the expiration of that time, it being declared by an Oracle that Troy could never be conquered without the arrows of Hercules then in the possession of Philoctetes, Ulysses and Neoptolemus were jointly sent to Lemnos to obtain them of him.

Ulysses, notorious above all men for craft and intrigue, and well knowing that Philoctetes bore the Grecians an implacable hatred for their barbarous usage of him, laid a cunning plan to get the arrows from him by fraud, which he communicated to Neoptolemus ; at the same time insisting that he should become the in-

strument of its execution. Neoptolemus, who was a generous hearted young prince, is at first struck with horror at the base proposal, and says,

“ I was not born to flatter or betray,  
——— What open arms can do  
Behold me prompt to act, but ne’er to fraud  
Will I descend ——————  
————— O king, believe me.  
Rather, much rather, would I fall by virtue,  
Than rise by guilt to certain victory.”

Ulysses, however, (so easy is it for an arch deceiver to corrupt the integrity of an inexperienced youth,) gained his point at last, by his cunning sophistry and honied persuasions ; and Neoptolemus submitted to an act of treachery which his soul abhorred. He first insinuated himself into the confidence of Philoctetes by a train of falsehoods, and then robbed him of his arrows, which he bore off to the ship that lay ready to sail back to the coast of Troy. But reflecting afterward upon the baseness of the deed and stung with remorse and pity, he, notwithstanding the invectives and threats of Ulysses, went back, and restored the arrows to Philoctetes.

After all the arts of persuasion to induce Philoctetes to go to the siege of Troy, or at least to send his arrows thither, had been used in vain, and there seemed no possibility left that that point could be gained by any human means, Hercules descended from heaven, and effected, what mere man could not do, a change of will in Philoctetes, who then voluntarily went with Neoptolemus to the Grecian camp, carrying along with him his bow and arrows ; and by means of them, Troy was conquered.

This, in short, is the moral of the fable :—open and honest policy, aided by the powers above, was crowned finally with more complete success, than could have been obtained by the deep-laid fraudulent plan of the crafty Ulysses.

The arts of falsehood and trick, whether on a large scale or a small one, are but foolishness, however subtilely managed.

*“The secret snare when falsehood-spreads,  
Herself she fetters in the subtle threads.”*

Craft, partaking as it does of moral turpitude, which it perpetually strives to conceal, exposes itself by its very attempts at concealment, as the serpent tells us where to strike him, by covering his head. Whether in the private or public walks of life ; whether in the common intercourse between neighbours and fellow citizens, or in the great concerns of princes and statesmen,—an honest policy will be found to wear best. Our great and beloved Washington, whom Heaven crowned with such marvellous success, had nothing of the craft of Ulysses. With a mind good as it was great, he sought noble ends by honest means ; by means that he could never blush to own. He was admirable for his real unsophisticated wisdom ; for the wisdom that soared above the base arts of intrigue, and which was without guile, without hypocrisy.

“Cunning,” says Mr. Locke, in his excellent treatise on Education,—“Cunning, which is the ape of wisdom, is the most distant from it that can be ; and as an ape, for the likeness it has to a man, wanting what really should make him so, is by so much the uglier ; cunning is only the want of understanding ; which because it cannot compass its ends by direct ways, would do it by trick and circumvention. No cover was ever made either so big or so fine as to hide itself. None were ever so cunning as to conceal their being so.”

There are few particulars in which mankind more often misjudge than in this : they are apt to think that the unprincipled artful, because they display considerable cunning, are of course men of superior parts ; whereas, generally speaking, their minds are narrow.

You will seldom find one of them possessed of true clearness and largeness of understanding.

So again, many a doting father is secretly gratified with the slyness, and the foxlike tricks of his boy; when, in reality, he has all reason to apprehend that the boy is getting to be a confirmed villain in grain, and will have a genius for nothing else.

The fox is the most noted of any of the inferior animals for craft and rōguery; yet the fox is one of the most miserable of all the brute creation. He has not a friend upon earth. The honester dog hunts and attacks him with peculiar malice. Every four footed animal seems to bear him a grudge; the weaker shun him, and the stronger pursue him. The very birds knowing his knavish craft, hover in the air over him, and seem to express their apprehensions and their hatred. They alight upon the trees and the hedges, as he is slyly creeping along the ground beneath, and with loud cries and chattering, give warning of his approach, as who should say, “yonder goes a cunning, beguiling, greedy rogue:—take special care of yourselves.”—And thus also it fares, for the most part, with those of Adam’s children, who have much cunning, but no principle of honesty.

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## NUMBER XII.

*Of the temporal advantages of uprightness of character.*

“ My son, sow not upon the furrows of unrighteousness.”  
*Advice of the son of Sirach.*

DR. FRANKLIN, founding his theory upon the principle that the human body is specifically lighter than water, tells us in substance, that one fallen into that ele-

ment, were he to abstain from struggling and plunging, and to let his body down with the feet foremost, remaining thus in a perpendicular position, except throwing his head as far back as possible, he might escape drowning for some considerable time at least ; because, in that position the face would be quite above the surface of the water.

This prescription or direction from the venerable Doctor, who knew as well as any man how to keep his own head above water, is of itself, or in its plain literal import, well worth the being held in remembrance. But craving indulgence for the license, I mean withal to make an analogical use of it.

Young men, as soon as they are entitled to the rights of personal independence, launch out in what is figuratively called the ocean of life. Indeed we are all of us in that ocean ; some in deeper, and others in shoaler water ; some going forward smoothly with the tide ; and others having the tide against them : sometimes we have fair wind and weather, and other times we are under a dark sky, and assailed with tempestuous winds that raise aloft the foaming billows.

What, then, is the safest way, at all times, and for persons of all ranks and conditions ? Why, it is told in only three words, *Mind the perpendicular*. Many a young man, and many a man not young, have I seen ingulphed and lost, not by reason of his wanting skill and alertness, but because he failed of keeping himself in a *perpendicular* attitude : whereas, on the other hand, never did I see a single one *totally* submerged, who had always been duly careful in that particular.

If even there were nothing to hope or fear beyond the grave, honesty would be the best policy ; inasmuch as it carries one through this world with most safety in the long run, as well as with honour : “ *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.* ” He travels in a plain

and safe path ; a fair character is his passport, and the laws of society are his protection. As long as a man holds fast his integrity, he cannot be quite undone ; for though, by adverse gusts, he be sadly plunged, his *face* will still be above water. Though he should suffer the loss of all things else, yet the consciousness of strict integrity will buoy him up, and the knowledge that others have, of his integrity, will give him a chance to repair his broken fortunes, or at the least will secure him that good name which is “ better than precious ointment.”

On the contrary, “ he that perverteth his way shall be known.” Though deceit and knavishness may sometimes procure momentary advantages, they are *but* momentary, and are much more than countervailed by the lasting ill consequences which they never fail to bring after them : for not only does dishonesty draw after it many inward disquietudes, but it lays one under very heavy disadvantages with respect to his intercourse with the world. Notwithstanding all his arts of cunning, it will be known : and when a man’s character is of that sort as to fill with suspicions every one that knows him, even his honest acts will be thought to spring from base motives, or to have some dark design. It will be suspected that the plague of leprosy still remains, either “ in the warp, or in the woof.”

It greatly behooves that young men form fixed resolutions at the outset of life, never to swerve from the *perpendicular*, in a single instance—no, not even in the most trivial one ; for one trespass against the laws of honesty leads to another, as it were by a sort of natural and necessary connection. So that, though there be many who, in their intercourse with the world, have never been guilty of one dishonest act, yet there are few who have been guilty of one, and *but* one. Because the first, by corrupting the moral principle, weakens

the power of resisting the next temptation ; because one knavish deed often requires another, and sometimes several others, to cover it ; and, lastly, because rooted knavishness of heart is harder of cure than any other moral malady, inasmuch as the corruption of the principle of integrity, is the corruption of the very source of all moral virtue.

He that has seen a rogue in grain, a thoroughly practised rogue, turn to a downright honest man ; has at least one marvellous thing to tell of.

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### NUMBER XIII.

*An exemplification of true christian honesty.*

THE following line of Pope,

“ An honest man’s the noblest work of God”—

has been pronounced unworthy of that celebrated poet, forasmuch as honesty is but a vulgar virtue, as common to the meanest as to the greatest abilities. Honesty, though commendable, is so far from being one of the noblest of human qualities, that the honest man may, nevertheless, be but a plain simple man, of contracted intellects, of very little education, and of a low condition. *This the noblest work of God ! Fy upon such nonsense !*

Now, to adjust this matter between the poet and the critic, it will be necessary to take a cursory view of the different standards of honesty, according to one or other of which reputedly honest men square their conduct, and of the different principles by which they are governed.

Men sometimes act honestly from policy, rather than from a principle of probity. They believe, and believe

aright, that "honesty is the best policy." According to this sound maxim, they mean to act, and they greatly find their account in it. In short, none are wiser in their generation than those who are honest altogether from policy. While carefully minding to keep themselves within the hedge of the law, they, without mercy or pity, take every advantage that the law will let them. They escape the infamy and punishment which commonly befall the *impolitic* wights who are versed in the black art of downright roguery. Thus *they* walk in a plain and safe path. An honest reputation is their passport, and the laws of society are their protection. These are your *hard* honest men, who are honest merely for their own safety and profit, and are just as selfish in their honesty as in every thing else. True enough, the poet is worthy of reprobation if he meant *them*. But though the fear of disgrace or punishment, and the desire of a fair character, may give birth to a creditable but contracted and spurious kind of honesty, which has in it nothing of the dignity of virtue; yet the truly honest man, however low in circumstances or mean in parts, is one of Virtue's nobility.

The truly honest man would be just as honest without law as with it. Guided by the paramount authority of conscience, he neither withholds aught nor exacts aught on the mere plea that civil law is on his side.

The truly honest is he who makes it a cardinal point to do to others as he would be done unto; and who decides with justice, when self-interest and justice are in opposite scales.

The truly honest man is never ostentatious of his honesty. Ostentation of it is always an ill sign: it looks like putting on a patch to hide a pimple.

But enough of definition. One good example is worth a score of definitions: and the following exam-

ple all will allow to be a good one — The anecdote is given in St. Pierre's *Studies of Nature*.

“ In the last war in Germany, a captain of the cavalry was ordered out on a foraging party. He put himself at the head of his troops, and marched to the quarter assigned him. It was a solitary valley in which hardly any thing but woods could be seen. In the midst of it stood a little cottage ; on perceiving it, he went up and knocked at the door ; out comes an ancient Hernouten,\* with a beard silvered by age. “ Father,” says the officer, “ shew me a field where I can set my troops a-foraging.” “ Presently,” replied the Hernouten. The good old man walked before, and conducted them out of the valley. After a quarter of an hour's march, they found a fine field of barley :—“ There is the very thing we want,” says the captain. “ Have patience for a few minutes,” replies his guide, “ and you shall be satisfied.” They went on, and at the distance of about a quarter of a league farther, they arrived at another field of barley. The troop immediately dismounted, cut down the grain, trussed it up, and remounted. The officer, upon this, says to his conductor, “ Father, you have given yourself and us unnecessary trouble ; the first field was much better than this.” “ Very true, Sir,” replied the good old man, “ but it is not mine.”

Such an example of honesty, I repeat, is worth a score of definitions. Here we have not an abstract notion of honesty, but we see it as it were embodied. Here we behold the express form and visage of genuine *christian* honesty, acting on the principle of loving one's neighbour as one's self. And what though the exemplar was an obscure and lowly man, distinguished neither for parts nor learning ? In the moral frame of his

\* Of the Moravian sect commonly called the United Brethren.

mind there was a nobleness of heavenly origin ; a nobleness far superior to eminent natural parts, which belong alike to the best and the worst of human beings.

Compare this humble Hernouten, or Moravian, with the illustrious chieftains who figured in that German war, and whose bloody deeds are emblazoned on the page of history. Compare his disinterestedness with their selfishness ; his philanthropy with their greedy avarice and fell ambition ; his tender and scrupulous regard to the rights of his neighbour with their unfeeling spirit of plunder and rapine :—and judge which party is entitled to stand higher on the scale of genuine honour.

Once more ; take for comparison, or rather for contrast, an individual example of the warriors of that age, and one the most renowned of all. Frederick the Great, a wholesale dealer in pillage and blood, happening, in one of his battles, to turn his head round, saw his nephew the Hereditary Prince of Prussia fall to the ground, and thinking him shot, he, without stopping, exclaimed, ah ! there's the Prince of Prussia killed—adding, with characteristical unfeelingness and avarice—*Let his saddle and bridle be taken care of !*—Compare the delicate moral mind of the lowly peasant, with the marble heart, the fell ambition, the unmixed sordid selfishness, of the monarch.

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#### NUMBER XIV.

*Of the prevailing habit of promise-breaking in common deal.*

In the polite world forms of speech are used, which are not meant to be understood according to their obvious meaning. For instance, when one man says or

writes to another, Your humble servant, or your most obedient, he intends not to bind himself to clean the boots of the one he thus addresses, or to do him any sort of menial service; and much less does he mean that he is ready and willing to yield him obedience in all cases whatsoever. It is hardly worth while, however, to be flush upon this topic, as the aforesaid forms of speech have almost become obsolete, at least in these United States. Pledges of humble service and passive obedience, mutually given in the interchange of civilities, are now as rare in this country as they once were common. This is no matter of regret; for it is not a *flower* that has been plucked up, but a *weed*.

But there is one other form of words, which seems to have come into general abuse over this whole country; and the more is the pity, as these last are words of grave import, as well as of obvious sense: I mean the phrase, so abundantly used—*I promise to pay*. In other times these words were passed with timid caution, and when passed, they were held sacred: but they are now coming to be words of mere form, meaning nothing; very like the old complimentary phrases—Your humble servant—Your most obedient. Not but that the *promisee* always interprets the text, as of old, according to its literal or expressed meaning. But the *promiser* perverts the text, that he may accommodate it to his own heterodox notions; or, rather, after the Romish doctrine of mental reservation, he, mentally, interpolates the word *Never*—making it run thus, *I promise (never) to pay*.

It would be endless to recount all the mischiefs that are flowing in upon society from this prevailing heresy; nor is it needful, since the most of them are too obvious to escape notice. Wherefore, not to mention the sore disappointments, the indignant heart-burnings, daily arising, in ten thousand instances, from this single

source ; nor yet to mention its destructive influence upon all confidence between man and man :—passing over these topics and others akin to them, I shall consider the matter merely as it affects the interests of the delinquent party.

Be it supposed that he is a man possessed of several estimable qualities ; that he has a large stock of what is called good nature ; that he is obliging and compassionate ; that, in the main, he is a moral man ; and, finally, that there is no apparent blemish in his character, save this alone.—Give the delinquent all these good qualities, and yet “the dead fly in the precious ointment,” spoils the whole compound.

There is a smack of immorality in every instance of voluntary word-breaking ; and in this, as in every other vice, one step naturally leads to another. The good natured man, who has neglected to fulfil his promise, is fain to cast about him for an excuse, and if he cannot *find* one, he *makes* one. This can hardly be done, for the first or second time, without a considerable struggle with moral principle. But it soon becomes feasible, and as natural almost as to breathe. In the process of this ill habit, he quite loses his moral feelings, as respects strict veracity ; and almost every day he lives, he deals in fiction without any sort of compunction.

Neither is this all ; he is the occasion of falsehood in others. He steps over to one of his neighbors, to borrow. His neighbour respects him for his sundry good qualities, but knows well the particular infirmity of his character. He is loth to lose his friend, and quite as loth to hazard his money. What does he do ? *He*, also, proceeds to frame fictitious excuses : “ I am very sorry, Sir, that it is not in my power to oblige you. There is no man living that I should be more

ready to serve ; but—but—” and then out comes the excuse, *lie and all*.

The man that makes it his general practice to shuffle off, as much as possible, the payment of his honest debts, not only forfeits all claims upon the confidence of society, but loses a main portion of self-respect. He often meets with fellow-beings, with whom he cannot so much as interchange the customary salutation, without enduring the feelings of self-abasement, and in conversing with whom, he is compelled as it were to have recourse to prevarication and quibble.

And what does he gain by it in his secular affairs ? Nothing at all. He is a loser even there. If he frequently suffers the compulsory process of law, he is a ruined man. Or if he procrastinate till he has quite exhausted the patience of his creditors, and then pays, seemingly rather to avoid the expense of law, than from an honest principle, still he loses that credit which, to his secular affairs, might be an incalculable benefit ; and, in seasons of pressing emergency, if he have not sufficient resources in himself, he can find them nowhere.

A strict regard to one's word or promise, is one of the first of social virtues. Wherefore young men who are entering, or have just entered, the threshold of business, would do well to keep, in memory the following maxims. Be as careful of *taking*, as of *giving* credit. Never run in debt beyond what you have a moral certainty, or at least a reasonable prospect, of being able to pay in season. Never defer payment when it is needed, and you have the power to make it.

## NUMBER XV.

*Of the heavy tax laid upon all worldly eminence.*

THE following advisory monition of an inspired prophet to his dear and familiar friend, contains a volume of instruction :—*And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.* Nothing is more certain than the vanity of human greatness, not only by reason of its being transitory and perishable, but, also, because it is often accompanied with much more than an ordinary share of trouble and vexation.

If we consider the first and greatest of all worldly distinctions,—I mean extraordinary gifts of nature,—even these, for the most part, are heavily taxed by the impartial hand of the giver. The few geniuses, (few indeed in comparison to the number of those who lay claim to that high distinction,) so far from being the happiest, are often the most wretched of mortals. The irritableness and spleen of distinguished authors, and especially of poets, are proverbial. The same texture and tone of the system, which qualify them for soaring into the regions of fancy and painting nature in all her hues, do utterly disqualify them, at least in many instances, for enjoying, in an equal measure with the rest of mankind, the common comforts and blessings of life. Not to mention the bitterness of rivalry and the torments of jealousy, which they are fated to feel and endure. So that, as regards ease and comfort, plain common sense with controlled passions, is better by far than genius, when taxed, as it so often is, with morbid sensibility, and with passions violent and ungovernable.

The greatest *Beauties*, are seldom the most amiable, the most discreet and respectable, or the most happy,

of women ; while, not rarely, their very beauty has been their ruin.

And indeed if we were to make a general survey of the extraordinary gifts of nature, and should weigh together, in an even balance, their advantages and disadvantages as respects the comfort of the possessors, we should find, that, in many instances, if not in most, the latter are fully equal to the former.

Neither are the gifts of Fortune exempt from heavy and grievous taxation. Vast wealth brings upon its possessor a load of incessant care, generates dispositions and feelings incompatible with quiet enjoyment, and often makes profligates of her children. Nay even Power, that idol of human ambition—even Power, for which riches themselves are chiefly coveted, is often accompanied with more of vexation than of substantial enjoyment. Royalty itself has its disquietudes and dire vexations. Mary, Queen of England, and joint-partner in the throne, in a letter to her husband William the Third, then in Ireland, thus pathetically describes the troubles of her exalted station :—“ I must see company on set days. I must laugh and talk, though never so much against my will. I must grin when my heart is ready to break, and talk when my heart is so oppressed that I can scarce breathe. All my motions are watched, and all I do, so observed, that if I eat less, or speak less, or look more grave, all is lost in the opinion of the world.”—How unenviable is such a lot as this, and yet how envied !

While on a time I was reading in General Lee’s Memoirs, how that Washington, when speaking on the subject of death, used often to declare that *he would not repass his life were it in his option*—while reading this extraordinary passage I was touched with a momentary surprize. What ! methought, can it be so ? The man whose life was covered with glory beyond

that of almost any other mortal—could *he* be unwilling to travel over again the same brilliant path, and to enjoy anew the same high honours! Could *he* find such a life tedious and irksome!—A few moments' reflection was sufficient, however, to convince me that the thing was neither incredible nor wonderful. In the seven years' war and the eight years of his administration, his solicitude and anxiety lest haply by some improper step he should commit the interests of his country, far outweighed, in all probability, every thing of real enjoyment that mere human power and greatness can bestow. Nor is it unreasonable to think, that during those fifteen anxious years, many a day labourer, nay, many a menial servant, enjoyed a greater portion of unalloyed worldly comfort than did the illustrious man whom the world held in such admiration.

The object of the foregoing train of reflections is not at all to decry Genius, or Beauty, or Riches, or Power; but rather to evince, that man or woman, in moderate circumstances, and ungifted with any uncommon endowments, may be quite as happy without these splendid distinctions, as those are who possess them. For the enjoyment of every *essential* comfort that this world can afford, there is need only of health and competence, together with a contented mind, a pure conscience and a thankful heart.

Between the periods of birth and burial how short the space! How very soon will come the time, when, with all the vast generation now treading this stage of mortality, no distinctions but of the *moral* kind will remain!

## NUMBER XVI.

*Of the inestimable value of a pious, discreet, and faithful Mother.*

It has been often observed, that some of the most illustrious of human characters were early moulded to the model of excellence by the maternal hand. Of this, I might adduce, from the records of history a goodly number of instances ; but for the present shall mention only one.

Sir Philip Sidney—born about the middle of the sixteenth century—was the wonder of the age in which he lived ; for though he died at a little more than thirty, his fame as a wise and profound statesman, was spread over all Europe. Nor was he less distinguished for religious and moral virtues, and particularly for generosity and tenderness of nature. It has been remarked of him, that “ the most beautiful event of his life, was his death.” Receiving a mortal wound in a battle in Flanders, the moment after he was wounded, and thirsty with the excess of bleeding, he turned away the water from his own lips, to give it to a dying soldier with these words,—“ Thy necessity is still greater than mine.”

This extraordinary man was indebted, for the rudiments of his education, to his illustrious and excellent mother, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, who, in a preceding reign had been beheaded. “ Her tender melancholy occasioned by the tragical events in her family, together with the mischance of sickness, that had impaired her beauty, inclined her to hide herself from the gay world, and to bestow her attentions almost exclusively upon the education of her children.” “ It was her delight,” says a biographer of

Sir Philip, “ to form their early habits ; to instil into their tender minds the principles of religion and virtue ; to direct their passions to proper objects ; to superintend not only their serious occupations, but even their amusements.”

Had not the loftiness of the house of Northumberland been fallen ; had lady Mary, the eldest daughter of that house, been a leader of fashion at the royal court—a distinction to which her rank would have fully entitled her ;—her Philip would, in no probability, have been the exalted character that he was.

To see a mother, herself highly accomplished, and capable of shining in the first circles of fashionable life ; to see her forego the pleasure of amusement and the ambition of show, for the sake of bestowing personal attentions upon her infantile brood ; to see her spend the best of her days in fashioning their minds and manners upon the purest models, guiding them with discretion, and alluring them to the love of excellence, alike by precept and example : to see this, is to behold one of the most charming of spectacles any where furnished in this fallen world.

And what though it be not in the power of such a mother to make a Philip Sidney of her son ? What though nature has gifted her children with no uncommon strength or brightness of intellect ? Yet, with the divine blessing, she may have such influence upon the *moral* frame of their young and tender minds, that they shall be disposed to improve their natural talents, whatever they be, and to employ them honorably. The benefits, in this respect, which highly capable mothers might confer on their children during a few of the first years of their earthly existence, are far beyond the power of calculation ; since these benefits would likely descend from one generation to another, down to distant posterity. “ Delightful task !”—In comparison with the pure and sublime enjoyment which the

faithful performance of it gives, poor and wretched indeed is the whole sum of pleasure that can possibly be extracted from the amusements of fashion.

Lamentable, however would be the condition of things in this respect, if either wealth, or rank, or superior talents, or any great degree of literary acquirements, were indispensably necessary, in a mother, to fit her for the noble and all important task which that relation devolves upon her. So far from it, a woman of mere plain sense, whose reading extends but little beyond the divine volume that contains our holy religion, and whose worldly circumstances are narrow and even indigent, is capable nevertheless, of conferring unspeakable benefits upon her little ones. As she is the first in their hearts, so, in their esteem, she is the first of women.—Her example is their model ; they copy her ways ; they hang upon her lips. The moral and religious lore inculcated with maternal tenderness by her, they never quite forget ; and very often it is the means of forming their characters for life.

Precious is the mother, whether of high or of low degree, who, in this respect, acts the real mother to the best of her abilities. Hardly can she fail of stamping upon the minds of her younglings, some salutary impressions which will never be quite effaced. Except the rare instances of most unnatural perverseness, their hearts will ever cleave to her. They will not forsake her when she is old. Their filial kindnesses will soothe and solace the infirmities and decays of her age. And when she is called “ to put off the mortal and put on the immortal clothing,” the genuine expressions of their hearts will be—“ We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand that reared us.—Gladly would we now recal that softest friend, a mother, whose mild converse and faithful counsel we in vain regret.”\*

\* Alden's collection of American Epitaphs, &c. No. 485.

## NUMBER XVII.

*Truths said of boys, which boys will ne'er believe.*

OUR life is beset with perils at every step, but no period of it is perhaps quite so perilous as that in which the boy is stepping into manhood. Then it is that his feeling is fervid, his hope vivid, and his self-confidence at the highest. Then it is that he listens with most rapture to the voice of the siren, that his heart is most susceptible to the allurements of pleasure ; and it is then that he spurns alike the trammels of restraint and the counsels of friendship.

Untaught by experience, he despises the experience of others ; wise in his own conceit, he scorns the monnitions of age and riper judgment ; full of himself, he feels no need of direction or advisement, and regards it as an insult to his understanding. He feels a sentiment of indignation and disdain toward those who should presume to teach *him* how to behave. His sense is deceived, “ his soul is in a dream, he is fully confident that he sees things clearly, and yet he sees them in a false mirror, exactly such as they are not.”

Nor is it always the youths of the least promise that are in the most danger. So far otherwise, those of forward parts, of lively imaginations, and of strong passions withal, are in peculiar hazard during those green years in which is the critical period of transition from the condition of boys to that of men. The very qualities that distinguish them and set them above their fellows, diminish the likelihood of their establishing a sober staidness of character, and oftentimes are the means of launching them into the whirlpool of dissipation, where all is lost ; where reputation, morals, and what-

ever is estimable in human beings, are all engulfed together.

How many instances do the perilous times we live in furnish—how many deplorable instances of hopeful boys abandoned and lost ere they were out of their *teens*! And by how much the more their parents had doted upon them, by so much the more are their hearts wrung with anguish.

Far less is the danger, for the most part, while the immature youth remains under the parental roof, or in “the well-ordered home.” There he finds it not so easy to shake off salutary restraints; there he needs must feel some respect for the opinion of the society in whose bosom he was born and educated, some reverence of parental authority, and some regard to the feelings of near kindred. But when he leaves the haven of home, and is pushed off into the stream of life, it is more than an even chance that he will founder in the stream, if he have not previously been under the governance of moral and religious principle. In his new situation, it often happens that he finds new enticements to lead him astray, and at the same time feels himself loosened from the authority and influence which had heretofore repressed his wayward propensities; and if vicious, but genteel and artful, companions, get the first hold on him, his ruin is in all probability sealed.

It was in clear view of these affecting circumstances that the celestial poet, Cowper, penned the following lines :

—“ My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,  
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,  
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
And trust for safety to a stranger’s care.”

It is hard to mourn over the *death*, but it is sometimes still harder to mourn over the *life*, of a beloved child. When they see the one whom they had expected would be found the solace of their age, the honour

of their family, and an ornament to society—when they see him, at the instant of their highest hopes, turn to the ways of folly ; no heart but a heart thus exercised, can conceive the sharpness of the pang. This is sorrow indeed ; and the best that parents can do to prevent it, or rather all they can do, is to lay themselves out in good earnest to train up their children in the way they should go.

Good education is the thing in the world the most important and desirable, but it is of wider scope than most people imagine. What is called learning is only a part of it, and so far from being the most essential part, it is but the *husk*: In vain will you employ your endeavours to educate your children, unless you give seed to the heart, as well as culture to the understanding ; unless you make their moral frame the subject of your assiduous and well-directed care ; unless you take at least as much pains to make them be well principled and of virtuous manners, as to make them shine in learning and accomplishments : for intellectual improvement, if their morals be neglected, will tend to render them wise only to do evil. If you train up your boy to a strict regard to truth, honesty, and integrity, and to a deep reverence of all that is sacred : if you train him up in habits of industry, temperance, and love of order—it is then, and only then, you can reasonably expect that he will pass through the perilous crisis before him uncontaminated, and that his manhood will be crowned with honour.

## NUMBER XVIII.

*Of a scornful temper—instanced in lady Blazon.*

THE progress of the great king Alp Arslan, was retarded by the governor of Berzem ; and Joseph the Carizman, presumed to defend his fortress against the powers of the East. When he was produced a captive in the royal tent, the Sultan, instead of praising his valour, severely reproached his obstinate folly, and the insolent replies of the rebel provoked a sentence, that he should be fastened to four stakes and left to expire in that painful situation. At this command the desperate Carizman, drawing a dagger, rushed headlong toward the throne ; the guards raised their battle-axes ; their zeal was checked by Alp Arslan, the most skilful archer of the age ; he drew his bow, but his foot slipped, the arrow glanced aside, and he received in his breast the dagger of Joseph, who was instantly cut in pieces. The wound was mortal, and the Turkish prince bequeathed a dying admonition to the pride of kings—“ In my youth,” said Alp Arslan, “ I was advised by a sage to humble myself before God, to distrust my own strength, and never to despise the most contemptible enemy. I have neglected these lessons ; and my neglect has been deservedly punished. Yesterday from an eminence I beheld the numbers, the discipline, and the spirit of my armies : the earth seemed to tremble under my feet, and I said in my heart, surely thou art the king of the world, the greatest and most invincible of warriors. These armies are no longer mine ; and in the confidence of my personal strength, I now fall into the hand of an assassin.”—Upon the tomb of the Sultan was this teaching inscription : “ O ye who have seen the glory of Alp Arslan, exalted to

the heavens, repair to Mara, and you will behold it buried in the dust!"

Whether the above cited Turkish narrative be matter of fact, or a moralizing fable, it is of interesting import. It strikingly pourtrays the instability of human greatness. It teaches impressively, that in humility is safety ; that a haughty spirit goeth before a fall ; and that the highest of mortals are not so far exalted above the lowest, as to warrant toward them disdainful feelings and behaviour.

Of all the various modifications of pride, the most intolerably disgusting is scornfulness of temper and carriage. Vanity is condescending and courteous ; it praises and flatters, to be praised and flattered in return. Affectation always has the laudable aim of pleasing, though it always misses it. Ambition is oftentimes polite, and "stoops to conquer." But scorn has no covering : it is naked deformity, without a shade, and without a single undisgusting feature. It is a foul stain upon rank and wealth ; it is a loathsome canker in the rose-bud of beauty. Not only is it disgusting, but it enflames with the bitterest and most enduring resentment and rage. The wounds of scorn's inflicting, no balm can cure, no ointment can mollify ; they continue to ulcerate and burn, not unfrequently after more serious injuries are forgotten or forgiven. It is easier to bear a blow of the hand, than a disdainful expression of the tongue. Almost any injury is more easily got over than downright contempt. The mere look of disdain is felt like the thrust of a sword. A scornful cast of the eye, or contemptuous air of the countenance, generates a hatred of the most desperate kind and character. In very deed, it is beyond the strength of unhallowed human nature to forgive those who scorn us and treat us with scorn. It is not near so hard to return love for hatred, as to return love for scorn. Nor are

instances uncommon in which the scornful are repaid in their own coin ; being made to suffer the contempt of the very persons they had contemned. The age we live in teems with instances of this sort.

Parents can hardly do their children a greater injury, than by encouraging in them a scornful temper : a temper so directly repugnant to the example, the precepts, and the whole tenor of the religion of our divine Redeemer ; a temper whose odious pravity, neither beauty, nor talent, nor any accomplishment of person or splendor of condition, can countervail. And yet, strange to tell ! there are parents—parents professing a veneration for the christian religion—whose lessons of instruction tend to encourage in their children a disdainfulness of feeling and carriage toward all such as are anywise behind them in rank, or wealth, or personal accomplishments. Instead of teaching them humility, gentleness, and courtesy, they teach them to practise airs of disdain towards such as are deemed their inferiors, in however small a degree. The little miss must hold up her head, and hold it still higher, if she has beauty. The seeds of scornful pride, thus planted and watered in young minds, take so deep a root as to be seldom eradicated in after-life. By the time they are full grown men and women, scornfulness of feeling and manner becomes a habit, of which, even the severest discipline in misfortune's school very seldom mends them.

Nothing is to be scorned but vice, and the proper scorn of vice itself, is mingled with pity for the vicious. It is enough to despise folly and shun it, to hate vice, and guard ourselves, and warn others, against it. At the same time we should not forget that every person, however degraded by folly and vice, still claims the privilege of a fellow creature, and, as such, is more entitled to our compassion than deserving of our scorn.

One observation more, and I shall have done. Nothing so bloats with scorn a low-bred shallow mind, as the sudden transition from narrow circumstances to wealth. Mrs. Blazon was reared in the shade of humble life. But the wheel of fortune that turned so many down, chanced to raise her aloft, and now she figures away among the fashionables of the age. Whatever appears before her in Poverty's livery, she despairs at the core of her heart. Her standing topic, whenever she displays herself to her company, is the disgusting vileness of female domestics. Despicable herd! All lazy, or dishonest, or too paltry proud for the meanness of their condition. She hath sorted, and tried, and shifted them, many times over, and she verily believeth there is scarcely to be found a real good one in all this 'versal warld.

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## NUMBER XIX.

*Of the Contempt of Womankind.*

“ When pain and sickness wring the brow  
A ministering angel thou.”

SCOTT.

THE man who expresses or feels a general contempt of womankind, evinces, thereby, either that his acquaintance has been mostly with the baser sort, or that his heart is devoid of the common sensibilities of our nature. A satire upon *Woman*! It is revolting; it is dastardly and brutish. Particulars are deserving of the lash of satire, but not the species. Of women, as well as of men, there are the artful and treacherous, the unfeeling and cruel, the mischievous, the disgusting, the abominable.—The species, nevertheless, is entitled to a high degree of respect, esteem and love.

*Dominic*, than whom a more marble-hearted monster never existed, though he stands sainted in the Romish Kalendar ;—that same *Saint Dominic*, the inventor and author of the hellish inquisition, was confessedly a woman-hater. Of him it is recorded, that “ he never looked in the face of a woman, or spoke to one.”

In like manner

— “ aside the devil turn’d,”\* when the first of female forms presented itself before him.

Woman was “ the last, best gift,” to man ; moulded out of that part of his flesh and bone which lay nearest the heart. And what though she was first in the transgression ? Was she not principal, also, in the restoration ? And when the Divine Restorer, *born of a woman*, was in poverty and need, who were they that ministered to him ? *Women*. When the disciples had fled through fear, who stood by, and so deeply sympathized in his last agonies, undismayed by the ferocious countenances of the murderous throng ? *Women*.—Who so affectionately prepared the embalming spicery, and were the first to visit the sacred tomb ? *Women*. To whom have all the after-generations been most indebted for the pious culture of infancy and childhood ? *To Women*.

The Eternal Wisdom has, if I may use the expression, cast the minds of the two sexes in different moulds, each being destined to act in a sphere peculiarly its own.

“ For contemplation he, and valour form’d,  
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.”

The one is destined and fitted for the more active and perilous scenes ; the other for the duties and trials of domestic life : the one to protect, the other to lean on the arm of her protector : the one to exhibit the sterner virtues ; the other the milder : the one possessing

more of active courage ; and the other, more of fortitude, of resignation, and of unweariable patience, and more of the benevolent affections.

This is nature's distinctive line, which, on the part of female character can never be overleaped without producing disgust or ridicule. Hence it is, that, of all affectation, none is more displeasing than a woman's affecting the spirit and manners of the other sex. We have a sort of admiration of the heroic intrepidity of the Spartan ladies ; of their contempt of danger ; of the stoical apathy, or rather exultation, with which they received the news of their sons and husbands dying bravely in battle. We admire them as prodigies, but neither love nor esteem them as women. And why is it that the atheistical *fair* is regarded with such singular horror ? why is the foul oath, the heaven-daring blasphemy, doubly horrible, in the ear of decency, when proceeding from the lips of woman ? It is because we contrast the outrage with the attributes of timidity, gentleness, delicacy, and sensibility, belonging more peculiarly to the sex.

One of the most deplorable wants in woman, is the want of *heart* ; the want of genuine sensibility, of the radical affection of sympathy and benevolence. It is a want, for which neither beauty, nor wit, nor the rarest accomplishments of person or mind, can by any means compensate. On the other hand, the most attractive graces of the female character, are not the artificial and showy ones ; but those of a meek and quiet spirit, and of beneficent dispositions, guided by moral principle and the discretion of sound sense :—in a word, graces the same that our holy religion inculcates and inspires.

In the fair daughters of Eve, domestic excellence is the predominating excellence ; in comparison of which, all the ornaments that literature or manners can bestow are as tinsel compared with the fine gold.

How much soever woman contributes to refining and amplifying the innocent pleasures of health and prosperity, yet still more doth she contribute, when she acts the woman, to alleviate the pains of adversity. In our sickness and sorrows she is indeed as “a ministering angel.” What heart else is so sympathetic? What hand else is so soothing? Who awaits the sick bed with most care, with most assiduity, with the most inexhaustible patience? Who, in spite of feebleness of frame, foregoes sleep, and patiently endures a course of remittless watchings of incredible length? Who, so often, devotes life, and the pleasures of life, to the needs of a helpless parent; to the solitary chamber of decrepitude? It is *woman*; the well-educated, the enlightened, the *christian woman*.

\* *Paradise Lost.*

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## NUMBER XX.

*Of the increase of Consequence ordinarily given a man by marrying.*

FAMILIES are clusters of little commonwealths, which can hardly subsist without government, and whose well-being depends greatly upon the manner in which they are governed.

The ruler of a family, with respect to the children belonging to his household and under his care, stands in the relation of a magistrate. A sort of magistrate he is, of very ample powers; for he is cloathed at once, in a certain measure, with legislative, judicial and executive authority.

In this character it concerns him to act with the utmost impartiality. To be partial is to be unjust; and

the injustice being perceived and deeply felt, (as it scarcely ever fails to be,) discontent, heart-burnings, and bitter murmurings will ensue. Favouritism is the bane of government, in the smallest communities as well as the largest. And look ! Often it is the favourite child that wrings the hearts of the doting parents ; and no less often the child that shared least in their regards, comes at last to be the solace and the prop of their declining years.

It behooves that the ruler of a family establish no domestic rules and laws but such as are reasonable in themselves, and conducive to the real good and welfare of the little community he governs. Else he acts the part of a tyrant—and one who is a tyrant in his own house, would be a tyrant over millions if he had it in his power.

As the laws for his household should be enacted with all the prudence and forethought he is master of, so also they should be executed with discretion and cool judgment. What would be thought of a judge, who should proceed to pass a penal sentence without conviction, or without giving a patient hearing and a fair trial, or who should fly into a violent passion, upon the judgment seat, and foam with rage while in the act of passing sentence ? Every body would think him utterly unfit for his place, and would cry out, Shame upon him ! Now the ruler of a family acts as a judge ; while the party arraigned before him, has neither the benefit of counsel, nor the privilege of trial by jury. In these circumstances it is peculiarly fit and necessary that the judge should act not passionately, but with cool deliberation.

Paternal magistracy must be supported by general decency of behaviour, or inevitably it will fall into contempt. It is an old Latin maxim, “ *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia :*”—in English, “ *Very great respect*

*is due to children.* Parents must respect themselves in the presence of their children. A governor, or a justice of a court, who respects not himself by a steady observance of the laws of decency, brings his office and authority into contempt : and it is alike so in domestic government. Nor does the requisite decorum of paternal authority, at all imply moroseness, and habitual sternness. So far otherwise, the father who is courteous and affable, and, in a proper manner even intimate, with his children, increases by it their esteem and respect, as well as their love.

A unit standing alone, however great a unit it be, is still the least of numbers ; but place it in close alliance with another unit, and instantly there is produced the respectable number 11.

Ordinarily a man multiplies his importance in society by marrying. Instantly he multiplies the number of his kindred ; the relations of his wife being, to him, as his own. The circle of friendly acquaintance is enlarged, by the addition of those with whom she had been in the habits of friendship. It is now, that society begins to have fast hold of him ; and it is now, that he himself begins to cling to society in good earnest. He is no longer a citizen at large, whose home is every where, or rather no where. He now feels that he has indeed a particular home, and is attached to the spot. And what though he have neither rank, nor wealth, nor talents, to distinguish him abroad ? He, nevertheless, is a man of consequence in his own family. Of that little community he is the legitimate head, by a right more divine than any regal authority can boast of. There is at least, one individual, who participates deeply and feelingly in all his interests and fortunes. His prosperity and his adversity, his joys and his sorrows, are her's. However obscure, he comes now to be a man of some authority. His children are

the subjects of his rule, as well as the objects of his paternal care and love. He says to one, Go, and he goeth ; to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to a third, Do this, and he doeth it. Nor is any ruler else obeyed with so much alacrity and good will, as that father, who acts the father with a proper mixture of discretion and tenderness. The eyes of his little subjects glisten with joy while they are fulfilling his wishes and obeying his behests.

Moreover, ordinarily a man is more likely to be a virtuous member of society for marrying. He feels doubly bound to good behaviour by placing himself in this relationship. It is not only his own interest that is at stake, but the interests of the partner whose earthly destinies are so closely connected with his : the interests, too, of the beloved offspring of their union. If he bring a blot upon himself, she, together with their children, shares in the infamy. Full well he knows that if he take to bad courses, he plunges those who are most near and dear to him, as well as himself, into an abyss of wretchedness. This circumstance cannot fail of bearing with some considerable weight upon minds not entirely lost to the common sensibilities of human nature.

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## NUMBER XXI.

*Of the use and necessity of small change in social and domestic Commerce.*

THE commerce of neighbourly social life is carried on chiefly by small change. Vast favours are seldom bestowed, and heavy obligations as seldom incurred. It is the constant interchange of little obliging

attentions, that constitutes *connubial* happiness. It springs from an uninterrupted series of little acts of mutual kindness, light as air of themselves, and costing little or nothing, but of immeasurable importance in their consequences ; as they furnish the only kind of food that will long sustain that delicate kind of friendship, and as the absence of these small attentions occasions, first coldness, then distrust, and finally alienation. Setting aside the brutish and the dissolute part of community, wives and husbands disagree oftener, by much, about trifles, than about things of real weight. Perhaps nine in ten of their disputes and squabbles, grow out of little things, such as trivial neglects, petty faults, or a word unkindly spoken. Nay, merely a hard look, sometimes lays the foundation of a hard quarrel. A husband never can please his wife, any longer than his general conduct evinces that he is, in most respects, well pleased with her ; and so *vice versa*.

If we extend our view to the larger circle of social intercourse, which comprehends relations, friends, and acquaintance of every kind and degree, we shall find that the frequent interchange of courteous attentions and petty kindnesses, is the thing that keeps them united together and pleased with each other ; and that in default of this, they presently lose all relish for one another's company. The truth is, as our tempers are oftener ruffled by trifles than by things of moment, so, on the other hand, our affections are more won by a long series of trivial obligations, than by one single obligation, however great.

Man, put him where you will, is a proudhearted little animal. And hence we become attached to those who are in the habit of treating us as if they thought us worthy of their particular notice and regard, and at the same time cold and secretly resentful toward such as

habitually neglect us in these little points ; even though the former never have done us a single important favour, and the latter, in some one instance or other, have essentially befriended us.

With regard to neglects and trespasses in those little things which constitute the main substance of social life, the worst of it is, that they are incapable of free discussion ; and, of course, the wounds from them admit of no healing. We are deeply touched with omissions or slights, for which it would be ridiculous to expostulate or complain. They leave a sting, which secretly rankles in our memories and festers in our imaginations, and inwardly we feel sore, while we are ashamed to fret outwardly : the cause of our provocation being an undefinable nameless something, upon which we never can ask for an explanation, and consequently can never obtain any satisfaction.

True enough, all this is often ill-grounded, or the offspring of mere jealousy. But that makes the case the more remediless : for ill-grounded enmities are the most obstinate ; because, as their causes exist altogether, or chiefly, in the imagination, the imagination is ever busy in colouring and magnifying them ; whereas when the offence, though real, is of a definite form and shape, it may be got over. I have seen two friends dispute and quarrel violently about an affair of moment, and then settle it, and presently become as kind and loving together as ever : and I have seen other two friends, who never quarrelled together at all, become first cold, and at last utterly estranged, by reason of a neglect or slight, on the one side or the other, which, of itself, was too trivial to be so much as mentioned to the offending party.

There are those who are willing to oblige, but are unwilling to receive obligations, though never so small, in any way or in any thing ; and they boast of it as a

noble quality. But whatever they may think themselves, they violate, in this respect, the general law of social commerce, which requires some degree of reciprocity, or a mutual exchange of commodities. One who is in the way of often receiving from another, little kindnesses which he is never permitted to requite, sinks into a dependent ; and his nominal friend, is not indeed a friend, properly speaking, but a patron. The shew of utter averseness to being obliged in any case whatever, is commonly understood aright ; it is taken for pride, or contempt, or coldness, and naturally gives displeasure ; while, on the contrary, to accept of little obligations with frankness, and to be alike willing to oblige and to be obliged, is the proper line of social intercourse.

I will only remark further, that the little daily attentions, upon which social feeling and happiness so much depend, ought to be natural or spontaneous, and not loaded and stiffened with ceremony ; and that the only way to make them quite natural or spontaneous, is to have written upon the heart that first of social laws, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

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## NUMBER XXII.

*Of the Great Social Law enjoining it upon each to yield place to each.*

IN the crowded streets of a great city, where multitudes are passing in opposite directions, while some are crossing obliquely and others at right angles, it is necessary for every one to give way a little to those he meets ; by which means they all have a free passage. Were the whole multitude to pass directly onward without any one's yielding an inch of ground to any

body else, all would be obstructed more or less, and confusion must ensue.—Or, if a churlish individual should take it in his head to march forward in a straight line, and in no case make way for man, woman, nor child, nor even for a procession, he would be sure to jostle against some or other at almost every step ; and would receive many an insult, and perhaps hard blows, for his obstinacy and impudence.

And considerably so it is in our journey through life, and with respect to our general intercourse with mankind. “ In the march of life no one’s path lies so clear as not in some degree to cross another’s ; and if each is determined, with unyielding sturdiness, to keep his own line, it is impossible but he must both give and receive many a rude shock.” In society, in neighbourhoods, and even among close friends, there will spring up rivalries and be sometimes a clashing of opinion, and if all were mutually obstinate there could be no bounds nor end to contention. Whereas by the exercise of mutual condescension, social harmony is preserved and the pleasures of society enjoyed.

The exercise of condescension is ranked among the precepts of the gospel, and is enjoined as a duty upon christians, who are expressly told from divine authority, *to be patient towards all men—to be courteous.* Hence it follows, that the extremely obstinate man who will not yield an ace in matters of interest or opinion, but runs foul of every one that chances to cross his path, does really transgress the rules of the gospel, as well as those of decorum.

Here let me not be misunderstood. Condescension has its bounds, and those bounds are strongly marked. One should never yield opinions, much less principles, that are of great and serious importance. One should never sacrifice conscience to please friends, or for fear of foes. One should never “ follow a multitude to do

evil." One should never suffer himself to be conformed to the world in vicious practices and customs, or infashions which, though innocent in themselves are too expensive for him to follow. One should never yield any thing to *importunity*, which self-justice forbids him to yield at all. In these points the person who would go through the journey of life *well*, must be firm and inflexible. But in matters of indifference, or of no serious consequence, whether respecting opinion or interest, a yielding, accommodating spirit, is not only desirable, but a moral and christian duty. And even in points which are not to be yielded, one should maintain firmness in such a manner, if possible, as to make it evident that he acts from principle rather than from obstinacy.

It would be easy to apply these observations to the various relations of social life, in all which the custom of well-ordered society imposes upon us a regard for the opinions and feelings of others; but more particularly are they applicable to the married state, for it is here that mutual obstinacy of temper meets with daily and hourly opportunities and occasions of collision. "Trifles as light as air" are perpetually disputed between them, and with as much warmth and pertinacity as if they were articles of faith. Not at all so is it in the instance I am going to relate; which, however, I must not be understood to hold up as one of the very best of examples.

In my whole pilgrimage through life, which has been a journey considerably long, I have seldom met with a couple who drew together in the connubial yoke more lovingly than Ephraim and Elizabeth his wife. Ephraim is remarkably tenacious of his rights, and values himself much in being master in his own house. Elizabeth, on the other hand, though a woman of uncommon sturdiness of disposition, always minds to humour him

in this particular ;—and in nothing under the sun does she seem to glory so much, as in obedience to her husband. Indeed she has often said, that, for whole years together, she had done nothing of importance without asking his advice.

The gift of advice, it is well known, is generally, of all gifts, the most ungraciously received : even those who ask it, seldom follow it. But not so is it here. Advice is asked, given, received, and followed, with the utmost cordiality.

Now would you know, courteous reader, how this is done ? I will tell you. Ephraim is an anatomist of the heart, as respects his wife ; and this knowledge he makes use of to excellent purpose. “ My dear,” says Elizabeth to him, “ Is it best I should buy this piece of silk, and that piece of furniture ? I *will* buy them, shan’t I. Now I think of it, I am invited to make one of the party to the springs ; would you advise me to go ? ” Ephraim, on his part, attentively reads her eyes, her whole countenance, and marks the tones of her voice ; and seldom is he at a loss as to her real inclination, or how to shape his answer. If, however, in any particular instance, he be unable to draw a positive conclusion by means of his skill in physiognomy, he asks her a previous question or two. And no sooner is he well assured that she inclines this way or the other, than he warmly advises her to it.

Elizabeth requites him with complacent looks and gracious words. “ Since you so advise me, so it shall be ; for you know I never fail to ask your advice ; much less would I reject it. And I *will* say it, Ephraim, your advice somehow always turns out for the best.”— Nor does the gratified husband, after her leaving the room, fail of boasting to the company, of the mild virtues of his spouse, and of her habitual readiness to bend to his authority.

## NUMBER XXIII.

*Of the necessity of learning how to use money.*

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“ To know  
That which before us lies in daily life  
Is the prime of wisdom ; what is more, is sume,  
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence.”

MILTON.

THERE is one inferior or subordinate branch of knowledge, which great learning overlooks, and great genius contemns ; though, in all ages of the world, learning and genius have suffered sore hardships and perplexities for the lack of it : I mean the knowledge of the use of money.

This is, it must be owned, a vulgar kind of knowledge ; amply possessed, not unfrequently, by minds of the baser sort. So far from entering into the scope of scholastic education, few are more destitute of it than some of the deepest scholars. The studies they pursue are altogether foreign from this, and the classical authors which they most admire, speak of it with contempt. It is the ambition of the studious boy to be a fine scholar. This object, along with virtuous dispositions, embraces, in his estimation, every thing desirable in character. After a painful and laudable course of exertions, he attains it. He steps forth into the busy world in the majesty of learning. By all men that are scholars themselves, his parts and his progress are admired. He has great talents, *rare talents, shining talents*, and all sense but common sense. He knows the reputed number of the visible stars in the firmament, and not a few of them he can call by their names. He has explored the depths of natural philosophy. In metaphysical acumen he is keen, and can split hairs, as

with an edge finer and sharper than a razor's. In the most celebrated languages of antiquity, and perhaps in several modern languages, he is marvellously skilled. But, with respect to that ordinary chaffer, which all, who have bodies to feed and cloath, must be concerned in, he knows less than a market boy of the age of twelve. And how will he ever get this kind of knowledge? His books teach it not, and besides, to make it an object of practical attention, is repugnant alike to his habits and feelings. Thus richly endowed, and, meanwhile deplorably lacking, he steps into the busy world:—and experience tells the rest.

It is no uncommon thing to find men of excellent parts and profound erudition, who, nevertheless, of the little affairs of practical life, are as ignorant as children. In their deal they are exposed to daily impositions: the *sharks* of society prey upon them, and they perceive it not. If they employ labourers, they know neither how to direct them, nor how to estimate their services; and are quite as likely to find fault with the honest and faithful, as with those who defraud them and artfully cover the cheat. If they enjoy an income, which, rightly managed, would be competent, it melts away in their improvident hands, and they suffer want. In whatever pertains to abstract science, they are entitled to rank with the great; but in every thing that relates to the supply of their daily necessities, or those of their families, they are least among the little. Though they have an accurate knowledge of the map of the heavens and of the earth, as they know nothing, or next to nothing, of the things about them, they are more pitiable for their ignorance than enviable for their learning.

This sort of helplessness does not, however, befall the learned only: it is alike common to the inheri-

tors of opulence. As they who, from childhood, have been altogether engaged in scientific pursuits, know less of the economy of a family, than of the economy of the visible heavens ; so they that are born to the inheritance of wealth, are naturally inclined to despise the very name and appearance of economy, as little and mean. Possessing a superfluity of money which they never knew the getting of, they squander, rather than spend ; and, in a very little while, the fruits of a whole age of painful industry are utterly wasted and gone :—not always from any uncommon pravity of heart, but sometimes, nay often, from merely the lack of ordinary prudence ; of that worldly prudence, the study or observance of which they deemed beneath their condition.

“ *The love of money*” (not money itself) “ is the root of all evil.” There is almost no evil, to which the inordinate love of money has not given birth or aid. But if things were to be estimated merely by the abuse of them, Literature, Science, the lights of Reason, and even Reason itself, must fall under reproach. What though money be the idol of griping avarice and the pillar of devouring ambition ? What though it minister in a thousand ways, to the lusts of men ? What though, to many, it opens the flood-gates of vice ? What though the sordid seek it as the chief good, and the knavish snatch it by whatever means ?—Is money itself in fault ? Is it not a blessing after all ? If it be not a blessing, then it follows, that the naked famishing savage is as well off as the well-fed and well-cloathed European or American ; that vile smoky cabins are as comfortable as choice houses ; and that civilization itself is no better than the forlorn state of nature.

Money is indeed a great blessing, and the knowledge of using money as not abusing it—charitably whenever

charity calls, but always discreetly—is an interesting branch of knowledge, and well deserves a place in our systems of education. For it is far more important to learn to guide our affairs with discretion, than to learn to “speak with tongues.” Neither is any science else so often and so urgently needed, as homely household science—or practical skill in managing those little domestic and personal concerns which every day of life brings along with it.

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## NUMBER XXIV.

*Of the wonderful boy—or the frequent failure of forward parts.*

THERE is a remarkable variety in the growth of mind, from the first visible dawnings of reason to the full maturity of its powers. Of minds that finally attain to an uncommon degree of intelligence, some have a slow growth; an ample harvest of fruit succeeds to no extraordinary blossom. Neither their childhood nor their youth gave promise of the parts which the process of time gradually and slowly developed. It has been remarked of the late Patrick Henry, so celebrated in the annals of Virginia, “that he did not appear at the bar until he was about thirty years old, and that he had attained nearly to forty, before the extent of his talents was discovered by the public, and probably before it was known to himself.” Other minds have a rapid growth, and shortly become stationary, or even go to decay; and the maturity of age, disappoints the high expectations that had been built upon the singular forwardness of childhood and youth. Their premature brightness passes away, and is presently gone, like the passing blaze of a meteor.

“ The wonderful boy, being no longer a boy, is no longer a wonder.” Not that this is the fact in all instances : there have been men of gigantic minds, who discovered marks of superiority in mental stature, almost from the cradle. One remarkable instance of it, was Doctor Samuel Johnson ; and another, the late Chief Justice Parsons. Of the latter, the Hon. Judge Parker, in an address to a Grand Jury, observes :— “ From the companions of his early years I have learned, that he was comparatively great, before he arrived at manhood ; that his infancy was marked by mental labour and study, rather than by puerile amusements ; that his youth was a season of persevering acquisition, instead of pleasure ; and that, when he became a man, he seemed to possess the wisdom and experience of those, who had been men long before him.”

But, notwithstanding these and sundry other similar instances, experience teaches that the wonderful boy, not seldom, makes but an ordinary, and, sometimes, but an inferior man : and this is owing, perhaps for the most part, to the two following causes.

In the view that is taken of childhood and immature youth, the partial or superficial observer is very apt to mistake loquacious vivacity for brightness of intellect, and a forward pertness for genius : and the fond hopes that are founded upon this common mistake, are at length blasted of course. In the progress of age, there is discovered the want of solidity and depth. The mind has no bottom. It retains its sprightliness through life ; but it is still the sprightliness of childish years.

But the most common cause of the deplorable failure of youths of great promise, is the indiscretion, not to say vanity, of their friends. It is quite common for parents to mistake their own goslings for swans ; to think their children very bright, if they have merely

common sense. But if any one of them happen to be more forward for his age than what is usual, he makes a prodigious figure in their partial and doting eyes ; nor can they be content to smother or conceal the delicious sensations of their hearts. They exhibit the prodigy of intellect to their acquaintances and visitors ; and these, out of courtesy, praise the wonderful boy to his face, and express quite as much admiration of his parts as they feel—and peradventure a little more.

Young master listens—“ nothing loth”—to these notes of adulation. Ere he is out of his teens, he thinks himself too wise for instruction, and too important for advice. He looks down with scorn upon the beaten tracks of life, and must needs strike out some eccentric path for himself. Or, depending on the mere force of genius, he despises plodding industry even of the intellectual kind, as fit only for vulgar souls. The deplorable consequences are inevitable.

A boy flattered much for his genius, or a girl for her beauty, is of all human wights the most likely to become tumid with vanity—that *wen* of the mind, which alike deforms it, and hinders its growth.

The natural gifts of the mind are dealt out with a frugal hand ; to none so abundantly as to supersede the necessity of mental labour ; and to few so sparingly, that they may not, under the enjoyment of suitable means and with well-directed industry, attain to a respectable standing for knowledge : and whatever of difference there be between mankind in regard to the original powers of their minds, the most common and the greatest difference between them, arises from a diligent cultivation of these powers on the one hand, and a slothful neglect of them on the other. With respect to intellectual, as well as wordly treasure, it is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich ; while the sluggard,

who neglects to cultivate and improve his mind, will find that mind a wretched waste at the age of fifty, of however great promise it had been at the age of twenty.

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## NUMBER XXV.

*Of bridling the tongue—with a squint at scolding mistresses.*

“The tongue can no man tame.”

If this even had not been the language of inspiration, experience has proved it to be the language of truth. The tongue is the most untamable thing in nature. “Every kind of beasts and birds, and of serpents, is tamed, and has been tamed by mankind.” But not so with the tongue. Who amongst the sons of men ever yet tamed his own tongue? Not one.—A person can *bridle* his tongue, or *hold* it: but no sooner does he take off the bridle, or let go his hold, than this little member runs wild, and out slips something from it, in the moment of passion or of levity, which the speaker presently wishes back.

Mark Anthony, it has been said, tamed lions, and drove them, harnessed to his chariot, through the streets of Rome. Had he tamed his own tongue, it had been a greater wonder still.—The rattle-snake has been tamed, and so has the crocodile: but the tongue never.

Pythagoras imposed on his pupils constant silence, for months and years together. But what did it all signify? No sooner were they permitted to talk, than they gabbled a deal of impertinence.—Besides, to withhold the tongue from speaking at all, is destroying it.

end and use, rather than taming it. The gift of speech is too precious to be thrown away.—Let the tongue be accustomed to speak, and to speak as it ought. “A word spoken in due season, how good is it !”

Unruly tongues, on the contrary, produce “a world of iniquity.”—Some are “full of deadly poison.” Such are they that curse men and blaspheme God, and which utter lies, for mischief or for sport. Such too is the deceitful tongue, “whose words are smoother than oil ; yet are they drawn swords.” There is the sly, whispering tongue, and the babbling, tattling tongue ; each of which “separateth very friends.” “The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.” He wounds others thereby and himself too. For the mouth of a such a fool is his destruction.

An impertinent, meddling tongue, makes bad worse, even when employed in offices of friendship. When Job was smit from head to foot, the busy tongues of his wife and his friends were a sorer plague to him than all his biles. And thus it often happens, that a person under misfortunes, suffers, as well from the busy meddling tongues of friends as from the malicious tongues of enemies.

There are *fiery* tongues. “The tongue is a fire.” Such is the tongue of the passionate man or woman, whose mouth, foaming with rage, casteth abroad words which are as “fire-brands, arrows, and death.” Such also is the tongue of the slanderer and backbiter, which being itself “set on fire of hell,” puts whole neighborhoods and communities in a flame, and “setteth on fire the course of nature.” How many a *pretty* mouth (ah, sweetly fashioned mouth) has been disfigured and made hideous, by the fiery tongue in it.

What then is to be done with this unruly little member, which “boasteth great things,” and occasioneth in-

finite mischief in the world ? Since no man, nor *woman* even, can quite tame it, what is the best way to manage it ?

First, correct the heart, and keep *that* with all diligence. The foolishness of the lips is first uttered in the heart. “ For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

Next, carefully bridle the tongue. Keep the *bit* upon it at all times ; especially in the moment of sudden anger, and in the hour of joy and conviviality.

Self-command, as respects the tongue, is as necessary as it is difficult. For we are told from divine authority, “ If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”

I will conclude this little essay with a caution to scolding mistresses : a wholesome caution borrowed from the pen of an anonymous writer of former times.

“ Economy” (saith this sound and orthodox lecturer of the fair sex,) “ much depends upon the good management of a family. I have often seen, and long been convinced, that a mild and dispassionate is much more efficacious and salutary, than a severe and rigorous discipline. If you would prevent faults in your domestics, take care that you *see but few* ; never animadvert on trifles, nor appear discomposed at accidents, nor reprove real faults in a passion.”

“ Mrs. Teasy, who has no daughters of her own, has brought up several girls, whom she took out of poor families ; but she complains, she never yet has had one but who was a vexation to her. They do her more mischief than all their work is worth ; and though she is always talking to them, she cannot make them mind her. Her complaints are partly true ; but the fault is her own, for she spoils all her girls by continually fretting at them. If Betty happens to turn over the swill

pail or break a mug, by stumbling across a broom which Mrs. Teasy in her hurry has left in the way, the old lady is in a rage. "There, you careless drab! I knew you would do so. You are always breaking things. You waste and destroy more than you earn. I had rather do every thing myself. I never will set you to do any thing again as long as I live." And so Betty sits down—"What! you baggage! have you nothing to do?—Go, fetch the creampot and turn the cream into the churn. How you handle it! I know you will break it, as you do every thing else." The poor girl, in a trepidation of carefulness and anxiety, lets it fall sure enough. It is dashed into fragments, and the cream scattered round the floor. "O la! you nasty trollop.—I never saw any thing like this. Just so you do every day. I cannot keep my hands off from you." Thus, with tongue and claws, she frightens poor Betty almost into fits. Nine tenths of the mischief which the girl does, is through an excessive caution to avoid it. Her mind is never calm, nor her nerves steady, because her mistress is ever blaming, scolding, and threatening. By degrees, however, the girl becomes hardened. If she breaks an article when Mrs. Teasy is not present, she secretes it. If enquiry is made, she *lies to prevent discovery.*"

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## NUMBER XXVI.

### *Of Saying too much.*

THE art of holding the tongue is quite as necessary as the art of speaking, and, in some instances, it is even more difficult to learn.

In a biographical notice of a celebrated speaker in, and manager of, the British House of Commons, it is remarked, that “ *he never said too much.*” This is, in truth, a rare commendation of a public speaker. One who, without circumlocution or parade, comes to the matter in hand at once, and pertinaciously sticks to it throughout—who seizes on the strong points in the argument and sets them to view in the clearest light—who says all that is proper, and nothing more—whose every sentence, and almost every word, strikes home, and who minds “ to leave off when he has done :”—such a public speaker, whether in the Forum, in the Pulpit, or at the Bar, will never tire his hearers.

But my present business is not with *Speakers*, but with *Talkers* ; the last being much the most numerous tribe, and entitled of course to the first notice.

Man, or even *woman*, when enjoying the freedom of the tongue, and gifted with the faculty of using it fluently, is a great deal more apt to say too much than too little.

When a room-full of ladies are all speaking at the same instant, only with this difference, that some tune their voices higher, and some lower—it is pretty clear that they say too much. But this is tender ground, on which I would tread lightly.

They who expect to be listened to by every body, but are unwilling themselves to listen to any body—who will hold you by the sleeve or button if you attempt to escape them, and din you the harder, the more you shew signs of weariness ; this tribe of talkers, as all but themselves will readily admit, say too much.

Persons who have wit, or (what is as bad) who think they have it, are in particular hazard of saying too much. It is one of the hardest things in the world to make a temperate use of real, or of self-supposed wit,

and more particularly of the talent for raillery. And hence, many a one, not wanting in good nature, and meaning the whiles nothing more than to show off his wit, multiplies enemies, and sometimes wounds his best friends. To make use of a line in one of Crabbe's poems,

“ He kindles anger by untimely jokes.”—

They who talk merely with intent to shine in company, or for the sake of showing off to advantage their own parts and learning—always say too much.

The fond *twain*, who entertain their visitors by the hour, with setting forth the excellent qualities or smart sayings of their own children, or with mawkish details of the rare conjugal affection that subsists between themselves—say too much.

Those who are inordinately fond of speaking in the first person—*I Myself*—it is more than an even chance that they will say too much.

When a young man, whose stock is small, is more eager to expend it in talking, than to encrease it by patient listening—he is very apt to say too much.

Old men are prone to say too much, when, getting into the *preterpluperfect* tense, they represent the former days as every way better than these. As if the human family, notwithstanding the perpetual accumulation of experience, were perpetually retrograding, instead of advancing ; and as if men and women now-a-days, were like *grasshoppers* in comparison of their progenitors.

It is seldom that men do not say too much, in their convivial moments. It is then that they are peculiarly apt to let off with the tongue, something which they are sorry for on the morrow : for “ when wine is in, discretion is out.”

As to those persons whose staple of conversation is

telling stories in long metre, though it is hardly to be expected that they can be prevailed with either to refrain or abridge, yet the following direction from *Chesterfield travestie*, may be of use to them as a general regulator :—“ When you mean to introduce an interesting story, make out a kind of preface about an hour’s length, by the way of impressing upon your hearers the pleasure they are about to receive. If they should be disappointed, that is not your fault. You did your best ; and so much time has been past away, at least to your own satisfaction.”

I will conclude this lucubration with a caution.—Let not him that talketh not despise him that talketh. There have been some wights of the human family, both male and female, who have obtained the reputation of abilities and wisdom by their grave taciturnity—every body thinking that they could say a great deal if they would—when, in sober truth, their habitual silence was owing rather to dearth of ideas or to dulness.

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## NUMBER XXVII.

*Of the salutary effects of the necessity laid upon man to labour.*

NECESSITY is the main spring of industry, and the mother of useful arts. The earth was given to the children of men in a rude and forlorn condition. And why ? Assuredly, not because it was out of the power or beyond the benevolence of the Creator to have rendered the whole face of it “ like blooming Eden fair,”—and so fertile every where, as to yield a plentiful abundance for human sustenance—without any human

labour, care or forethought. This did not, however, consist with the plan of divine wisdom.

Man is a being compounded of mind and matter; and a great part of his necessary employment is such as tends to evince the superiority of the former over the latter. The stubborn glebe, he meliorates, softens, and fructifies. Regions of forest he subdues, and turns them into fruitful fields and blooming gardens. The droughty soil he irrigates, and the fenny he drains. Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, are all laid by him under contribution, and he compels them, as it were, to minister, not only to the necessities and comforts, but to the embellishments of life. In ten thousand ways, by skilful contrivance and the dint of industry, he overcomes the resistance of stubborn matter, and forces it to yield to his use—to his comfort—to his adornment. And by all this busy round of contrivance and of labour, the faculties of his mind are developed, his body is made the more strong and healthy, his morals the more virtuous or the less corrupt, and his life unspeakably more contented and happy. For he rejoices in the work of his hands, nor feels he the burden of time, which hangs so heavily upon the sons and daughters of sloth.

Man is no where found more degraded, than in climes the most delicious, and upon a soil that produces, spontaneously, an abundant supply of his wants. It is *there* that his faculties are torpid, his mind and his heart most deeply corrupted, and his existence superlatively wretched. If we may credit the accounts of voyagers, some of the south-sea islands are earthly paradises in regard to climate and soil, but border upon the infernal regions as to customs, morals and manners; both the men and the women being so deeply corrupted,

that their abominable vices alone, not only prevent any increase of population, but threaten even to extirpate them entirely from the face of the earth. Nor would it perhaps be much better with the human race over the world, if the whole world were in a condition that superseded all necessity for labour.

If it seemed meet to the all-wise Creator, that man, in his primeval state, should be subject to labour—that he should be made *to dress the garden and to keep it*—much greater is the urgency for industrious habits, in his lapsed state, in which idleness is sure to be prolific of vice. And, accordingly, upon the moral change of human nature, the earth, too, underwent a change, the thorn and the thistle grew up, in place of the fragrant flower and the nourishing plant. The heat consumed by day, and the frost by night. The inert matter he had to deal with became doubly intractable. Obstacles to sloth, and imperious calls to industry, multiplied.—So that man was compelled to eat his bread in the sweat of his face.

Happy necessity! the necessity that prevents a frightful mass of moral evil, and produces an immensity of good.—Without it the wickedness of man would be doubly great upon the earth; and so far from enjoyment—feeling the fulness of satiety and the intolerable burthen of time—like Milton's fiend in paradise, he would “see undelighted all delight.”

Among the vain sons and daughters of men, there are those who despise labour, even though their circumstances urgently need it. As if the point of honour lay in being useless, improvident, and helpless.—This is *Folly's* pride. Whoso despiseth labour, despiseth an ordinance of heaven. Not only is labour made necessary by the law of our general nature, but it

As enjoined by a positive law from above—*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.* The truly wise, so far from despising labour, ever hold it in honour. To honour useful labour—to encourage the industrious—to bring up children to early habits of industry and frugality—and, on the other hand, to discountenance and hold in repreach a life of sloth, of improvidence and of dissipation, are *indispensables*, that ought to be engrained in the public mind. They are truly republican sentiments and habits ; and, as far as they prevail and become fashionable, so far will there be order and thrift in any free republic, and especially in this free country, in which there is such an unbounded scope for industry.

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## NUMBER XXVIII.

*Of the design and use of the thumb.*

THE whole frame of the human body so clearly evinces design, and, of course, an All-Wise Designer, that atheism would appear the extreme of folly if even there were no other arguments to confute it, than those which are in a manner forced upon us whenever we take a careful survey of ourselves.

The mechanism of the eye is marvellously complex, and yet nothing in it is superfluous ; every part bearing a necessary and obvious relation to the purpose for which it was formed. Nor is the mechanism of the ear less adapted in every part to the design of its formation. These wonderful organs of sense are given us, however, in common with the lower animals, of which there are some that far excel us in clearness of sight

and quickness of hearing. But the human body has one appendage, which belongs not to any of the brutal creation, and which evidences design or contrivance, as clearly as the eye or the ear : I mean the *Thumb*. This puny limb, which scarcely ever is noticed by poet or philosopher, has been the main stay of the human family, in all ages and countries.

Had the human body lacked this little limb of labour, man would have been the most forlornly helpless of all animals, and indeed the whole race must nearly have perished thousands of years ere the present time. He neither could have tilled the ground, nor drawn a fish from the water. He neither could have felled the forests, nor furnished himself with weapons of defence against the ferocious beasts with which they were inhabited. He would have been alike incapable of *making* and of *using* any of the instruments necessary for his sustenance, clothing, or defence. Suppose that the thumb, and *that only*, had been overlooked in the general contrivance of the human body ; suppose that all the organs and members of the body, and particularly the *hands*, were exactly as they are now, save that, instead of four fingers and a thumb, there were five fingers standing parallel to each other :—the body, in that case, would have been a machine wonderfully curious, but utterly inadequate to the purposes of human life. Suppose further, that as a recompense for the want of the thumb, man had been gifted with a double or treble portion of intellect ; he, notwithstanding, must have been helpless and wretched ; for it would be out of the power of finite intellect to supply that deficiency, or even so much as to provide for the mere necessary wants of the body.

Man, upon his expulsion from paradise, was cast into a wilderness world, and a wilderness it must have

remained to this day, but for the thumb upon his hand. He was commanded to subdue the earth, and was authorised to exercise dominion over the beasts of the field ;—things as much out of his power, had he been thumbless, as arresting the stars in their courses. But this feeble being, through the constant aid of the thumb, what wonders has he wrought! See the forests felled ; see blooming gardens, and fields waving with golden wheat ; see villages, towns, cities, the spacious and well-finished tenements of man ; see his convenient and comely attire, the fulness of his cup and the comforts of his table ; see thousands of ships proudly traversing the ocean, freighted with the superfluities of some countries for the supply of the wants of others ; see the finer works of art, pictures, statuary, engravings, embroidery :—see all these, and a thousand other things, and you will recognize in every one of them, the agency of the thumb. Nay, all our books of Divinity, Law, Physic, Surgery, History, Biography, Philosophy, Poetry, or of whatever name or description, were first *thumbed* out by the laborious penmen of them. So true is it, that as the hand is instrument to all other instruments, it is the thumb chiefly, that ministers ability to the hand.

The thumb points to duty. Its admirable contrivance manifests both the wisdom and the goodness of the contriver. It plainly shows at the same time, that man is destined by his Maker to employments of manual labour ; and consequently, that manual labour, so far from being a reproach to him, is one of the essential duties of his nature and condition, and ought rather to be held in honour than disgrace. And if there be some exceptions, they include but a very diminutive proportion of the human family : for, of the whole world there are not more perhaps than a hundredth

part, who are fairly exempted, by rank, or fortune, or mental occupations, from the necessity of labouring with their hands.

*Sucking the thumbs*, is a proverbial phrase, denoting a total neglect of employing them in any useful way answerable to the design they were made for. A great many of this “untoward generation” have the scurvy trick of sucking their thumbs ;—a great many, too, whose circumstances imperiously demand a better use of them. It is a pitiful practice, whether in man or woman ; directly leading to poverty and want, and, not unfrequently, to the worst of vices. It behooves that parents keep a sharp look out, lest their boys and girls get into this way, so dangerous to their morals, so deadening to all their faculties, and so destructive of their future prospects in life.

But there is one use of the thumb, that is infinitely worse than not using it at all : it is employing it in spreading abroad falsehood and moral poison, with the pen, and with the type. It were far better to be born without thumbs, than to use them so abominably.

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## NUMBER XXIX.

*Of the injury to the intellectuals, arising from a minute division of labour.*

THE subdivision of labour, in the manner of Europe, increases national wealth, but diminishes human intellect. *There*, and yet more in China, the labouring mechanic is not only confined to a single article of manufacture, but to a particular part, and often to a minute and trivial part, of that article : and though, in this, way, a great deal more labour can be done by the

same number of hands, and even better done, yet the labourers themselves are so stinted as to the exercise of their faculties both of body and mind, that they sink almost to mere machines. Very like a machine is indeed the human being who employs his whole lifetime in putting heads on pins, or points on nails. Whatever of mind, or of native intellect, he may have at the outset, it naturally contracts itself to the puny dimension of his occupation.

In the primitive ages, employment in the manual arts served to develope, rather than imprison, the faculties of the mind as well as of the body ; because the artists were not labourers merely, but contrivers. The sacred volume that contains the records of our holy religion, contains also some of the most useful as well as most authentic matters of ancient history ; and in it we learn, how national ingenuity, aforetime dormant, was awakened and brought into action upon a great occasion.\* The two principal artists were endowed from above—whence cometh every good gift—“ with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.”

Neither is it to be thought that there were not—besides the two that are particularly named—thousands of the sons of Israel, whose wits were on that occasion exercised in ingenious devices. Nor were the women behindhand of the men. “ All the women that were wisehearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.”—Not that every

\* 35th Chap. Exodus.

Israelitish woman was a spinster : but all the women that were *wisehearted* did spin with their hands. And no doubt they did vie with one another in regard to ingenuity and beauty of workmanship, both of spinning and of dying ; and all this put into exercise the faculties of their minds, which, in no small degree, were brightened and expanded by such exercise.

We have heard our grandmothers say, that, in their times, the like was seen in New-England—that the *wise-hearted* women did spin—that they did seek wool and flax, and did work willingly with their hands—and, thus, clothed their households, if not with scarlet, yet with garments decent and warm ;—and that it was the *happy She*, who could outdo her neighbouring females, either in despatch, or in the strength or the beauty of her work.

The labouring men of our country, and especially of the northern section of it, can turn themselves with wonderful facility to different kinds of employment. Generally, they are not altogether *this* thing, or *that*, or *the other*. The mechanick knows how to use the hoe and the plough ; or if not, his single trade embraces what, in old countries, is branched into half a dozen. The farmer too, besides the great scope of thought and contrivance which his own proper employment gives him, is, in some respects, an artist ; some parts of mechanical business, of the coarser but most necessary kind, he can turn his hand to upon occasions. The consequence of this is, that our countrymen are not so perfect in any one particular. Whereas the labouring artisans of the older world commonly excel in one thing, but are quite ignorant of every thing else. If they are put aside from their particular trades, they know not how to help themselves by any other means.

There are advantages on both sides ; but, in my

humble opinion, by far the greatest on our own. Distant from us be the day, when, by subdivision of labour, after the present manner of crowded countries, a large proportion of the American population shall be confined as it were in dungeons—rarely seeing the open face of heaven or of earth—and perpetually employed in the dull round of occupations incapable of starting a single idea in their minds.

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## NUMBER XXX.

*Of the brood of idlers—particularly the gentlemanly idlers.*

THERE are multitudes who pass along the stream of life without labouring at the oar, or paying any thing for their passage ; so that the charge of their fare falls most unreasonably, upon their fellow-passengers. This is an evil of a very serious and dangerous nature ; for such idlers not only burden community, but corrupt it. To say that it were as well for their country that they had never been born, and that they are unworthy to be numbered in the census of its population ; to say this, is saying too little. They not only do no good, but much harm : they not only prey upon the fruits of other mens' industry, but deprave public morals. They are like scabby sheep that taint the flock. It is in the nature of this kind of gentry to multiply very fast, if they are not checked ; for, besides that they commonly bring up their children, if children they have, in their own way of living, they are perpetually making proselytes from the families of their neighbours ; leading astray, by their examples and enticements, a great ma-

ny youths, who, but for them, might have been industrious, and useful to society.

In some countries, the wisdom of legislators has been much employed on this subject, and the arm of executive power has enforced industry as a political duty which every person owed to the state. The Hollanders in particular, in the early age of their republic, considered idle persons as politically criminal, and punished idleness as a crime against the commonwealth. Those who had no visible means of an honest livelihood were called before the magistracy to give an account how they got their living ; and, if they were unable to render a satisfactory explanation on this point, they were put to labour. Those thrifty Hollanders are said to have employed, also, the following singular expedient. They constructed a kind of box sufficiently large for a man to stand therein upright and exercise his bodily faculties. In the interior of it there was a pump. The vagrant or idler was put into this box, which was so placed, in the liquid element, that the water would gush into it constantly, through apertures in its bottom and sides ; so that the lazy culprit had to work at the pump, with all his might, and for several hours together, to keep himself from drowning. The medicine, it is said, was found to be an infallible cure for the disease ; insomuch that no person was ever known to work at the pump for the second time.

I do by no means recommend those old Dutch laws and customs for domestic use here. Sacred Liberty ! I would not hurt a hair of thy head. Yet every thing ought to be done in this case, which can be done, consistently with that personal liberty which our free constitutions of government guarantee to every citizen of the States. How far our laws, in consistency with the rights of citizens, might go towards restraining no-

torious idleness and dissipation with respect to *adults*, it is not for me to say. I leave it to men in upper life, and gifted with superior wisdom. Thus far, however, I will venture to affirm, that, as children, in some sense or other, do actually belong to the community, so it ought to be in the power, and be made the duty, of the political guardians of the public welfare, to see to it that they be brought up in such a manner that they may be likely to strengthen and adorn, rather than weaken and deprave society. For which reason, when idle profligate parents are manifestly leading their children in their own footsteps, they ought to be taken from the dominion of such unworthy parents, and be placed under the care of those who would accustom them to habits of virtuous industry. It would be an act of charity to the children themselves; and would give to the general community a vast number of sound and useful members, who, else, would grow up to prey upon its earnings and poison its morals. If all suitable pains were taken with the rising generation, to induce them to sober and industrious habits, by example, by the incitements of persuasion, and even by reasonable force, whenever force is necessary, the effects would be happy beyond measure. An infinite mass of mischief and crime would be prevented; the officers of justice would have little to do; our jails would, comparatively, be empty.

I will only add, *Public Sentiment*, as it now stands, in some, if not in most parts, of our country, must needs be rectified; else idleness and dissipation will continue to gather numbers and strength. So long as an idle worthless chap—perchance a gambler and sharper—by means of a fine coat, a lily-hand, and graceful bows, is able to take rank of an industrious, worthy young farmer, or mechanic, who gets an honest living

by the sweat of his face—it will be vain to denounce idleness, or to recommend industry. Under such circumstances, young men, whose ambition is more than a match for their moral principle, very naturally turn idlers, or set out to live by their wits; well knowing that if they can only keep up a gentlemanly appearance, by almost whatever means, they will be much better received, and rank much higher, than if they were plain, industrious, labouring men.

Lo, a Ball ! a splendid ball.—And who enters now ? Who is he, that all the gentlemen greet so heartily, and all the ladies notice so readily ? It is Mr. *Flash*, an itinerant, who, without funds, without industry, without any visible means, always dresses in high taste, and has, at his fingers' end, every punctilio of fashionable manners—he is quite the *gentleman*, every inch of him.

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## NUMBER XXXI.

*Of productive labour, other than that of the hands.*

“ KNOWLEDGE is power.” This was a favourite maxim of Bacon, so eminent in the ranks of philosophy.

The weakness of man is marvellously strengthened by his knowledge. It is by his superior knowledge that he gains dominion over the various races of animals, of which many are much stronger and swifter than he ; over the stubborn earth, and over the powerful elements, Fire, Air, and Water. Naked came he into the world, and naked must he ever have remained, had not the inspiration of the Almighty given him understanding, and furnished him with motives to employ this noble faculty in an infinite variety of useful ways.

Man is feeble of body : his main strength lies in his mind. Apart from his superior intellectual faculties, he would be one of the most helpless, forlorn, and wretched animals, upon the face of the earth.

The invaluable worth of knowledge, and of education by which it is acquired, has been ever, in all civilized countries, the standing theme of profound discussion, or, more often, of splendid but empty declamation ; so that only scanty gleanings are left to the modern pen. There is, however, one respect in which the subject has been neither exhausted nor frequently touched : it is the intimate connection between knowledge and *Productive Labour*.

Productive Labour, so essential to the sustenance and support of the general community of man, is two-fold—direct, and indirect.

Direct productive labour consists of that bodily exercise, that “ sweat of the face,” by means of which we are furnished with food and raiment, and with all the various necessaries and elegancies of life. By this it is that life is sustained and decorated ; and it is in this way that the great bulk of mankind is necessarily employed. Those who labour with their hands, in husbandry and in the various useful arts, are as it were the strong pillars that support the living world. But, then, they are in no wise entitled to arrogate the honour to themselves exclusively :—“ The hand cannot say to the eye, I have no need of thee.”

*Indirectly*, there are, in the common vineyard, productive and efficient labourers, other than those who work with their hands. They are the ones who invent, conceive, plan, guard, and regulate : so that, after all, *Mind* is an essential and most eminent operator throughout the whole process.

I will barely suggest a few particulars ; leaving it to

the reader to enlarge upon them, and to combine them with others which are alike obvious.

Very little would it signify, though we had hands to labour, if we knew not how to use them ; nor should we know how to use them skilfully, but for the inventions of those who have gone before us. Without the aid of the arts, our hands must be idle, or work to no purpose. In all the multitudinous occupations that are now going on, whether upon land or water, whether for the sustenance or the adornment of life, there is a never-ceasing dependence upon the arts. And how were the arts explored, and how brought to the wonderful state of perfection which they now are in ? By intense labour of the *Mind*. From one generation to another, very many who laboured not at all with their hands, have laboured abundantly, and most efficiently and usefully with their intellects. Their inventions and improvements have directed and guided manual labour, and have facilitated and abridged it in a marvellous manner and degree. And assuredly, theirs is to be regarded as belonging to the highest class of productive labour ; assuredly he that contributes to the general stock of knowledge in the arts, is a benefactor of the public, and is entitled to the gratitude of all ; assuredly, the labouring man is bound to encourage the arts, which so mightily aid the work of his hands. Nor ought he to think lightly of mere science ; it is the mother of the arts, and, in sundry instances, it has, undesignedly and unconsciously, led to the discovery of them. The star-gazers of ancient Chaldea never once dreamed of the vastly important practical purposes to which the world, in succeeding ages, would apply the knowledge of astronomy.

Again, it is to be considered and distinctly remembered, that the labouring class spend their strength for

nought, unless the fruits of their industry be securely guarded from plunder and robbery, and against the hand of rapaciousness, in whatever manner, or under whatever guise, it may assail them. Hence, of necessity, there must be government, laws, and courts of justice ; and of necessity, also, there must be lawgivers, executive and judicial officers, advocates, &c. Now all these must be paid out of the common stock. But, provided they discharge their duties ably and faithfully, and are content with reasonable recompense, no labourer is more worthy of his hire. By no means are they to be regarded as drones in the hive. As they are the necessary guardians over the general treasure which manual labour accumulates, so they have a right to a share of it—at the same time, on the part of the general community special care must be taken lest the guardians of its rights and its property, like the ravenous sons of old Eli, should make such free use of the *flesh-hook*,\* as to leave little else to the commonalty but the broth.

Moreover, since laws can afford us no effectual protection unless the morals of community be preserved from general corruption, it clearly follows that the professional men who faithfully devote their time and attention to the interests of pure morality, are really, though indirectly, productive labourers in even the *secular* sense of the terms. I will particularly instance the venerable Ministers of our holy religion, who—laying out of the question all considerations of the future life—do, I presume to affirm, greatly increase the amount of productive labour by the weight of their exhortations and influence against idleness and profligacy, at the same time that they no less contribute to the security of the fruits of labour by the generally moral-

\* First book of Samuel, 2d chapter.

ising effects of their ministrations. So also, the well-qualified and faithful instructors of our children and youth are to be regarded in nearly the same point of view—as among the most productive and useful of labourers.

Neither is it true, that no labour is hard, except that of the hands. So far otherwise, many an excellent man, by intense labour of mind in his profession, has worn himself out much sooner than he would have done, had he employed an equal measure of industry in the labours of the field.

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## NUMBER XXXII.

### *A sorrow-soothing Scottish Legend.*

OLD age is justly considered as situated on the confines of the grave ; and, of course, the ravages that death makes in that uttermost province of human life, excite no surprize. It is an adage nearly as ancient perhaps as time, that the old *must* die. Indeed the aged may be said to die while they live. By little and little they are losing, almost every day, somewhat of the very stamina of life ; and even if no mortal disease supervene, their earthly tabernacles, must, ere long, be dissolved, of mere decay. This natural process of dissolution is often so gradual as to be little perceived, and least of all by the subjects of it ; but the process is constantly advancing, whether perceived or not. So far, therefore, from its being a marvel that the aged die at last, the marvel is that they live so long ; considering the extreme brittleness of the thread of life, and the many hair-breadth escapes from death which they must have had during such a great length of time.

On the contrary, *premature* deaths occasion, not merely the bitterness of transient sorrow, but that rooted anguish which rises from disappointed hopes. And it is particularly so with regard to children, cut off in the flower of youth, or in the bud of infancy. Parental affection *hopeth all things*; and when the object of its fond hope is snatched away, it faints under the stroke, and is ready to say, repiningly, “It were better not to have had the gift at all.” But when this object is an *only* child, the cup of anguish is not merely full, but it overflows. Bereavement of this last description is frequently noticed in the holy scriptures, as most deeply affecting; and accordingly, pious writers in all ages and countries, have been assiduously anxious to pour the balm of consolation into hearts thus torn with anguish.

With such benevolent views, no doubt, was fabricated the ancient legend, or fable, with which I shall conclude these reflections. It originated in the Scottish highlands, whose inhabitants have, in great part, borne a considerable resemblance to the patriarchal ages; having, from time immemorial, led a pastoral life, and been remarkable for frugal plainness of living, for sobriety, and for zealous attachment to the holy religion they profess. And a singular circumstance, which, to *them*, has given peculiar efficacy to the legend hereafter related, is, that they have been, and are, generally speaking, so tinctured with superstition, as firmly to believe in the frequency of supernatural visions or apparitions. I will only remark further, for explanation, that every highland householder, agreeably to an ancient custom, makes a festival for his friends and neighbors, on the death of any one of his family; which funeral feast is called *The late Wake*.

A married couple of the Scottish highlands, had thrice lost their only child, each dying at an early age.

Upon the death of the last, the grief of the father became boisterous, and he uttered his plaints in the loudest terms.

“ The death of the child happened late in the spring, when, in the more inhabited *straths*, sheep were abroad ; but from the blasts in that high and stormy region, they were still confined in the cot. In a dismal snowy evening, the man, unable to stifle his anguish, went out, lamenting aloud, for a lamb to treat his friends with at the *late wake*. At the door of the cot, however, he found a stranger standing before the entrance. He was astonished, in such a night, to meet a person so far from any frequented place. The stranger was plainly attired ; but had a countenance expressive of singular mildness and benevolence, and addressing him in a sweet impressive voice, asked him what he did there amidst the tempest. He was filled with awe which he could not account for, and said he came for a lamb.—“ What kind of lamb do you mean to take ?” said the stranger. “ The very best I can find,” he replied, “ as it is to entertain my friends ; and I hope you will share of it.” “ Do your sheep make any resistance when you take away the lambs, or any disturbance afterwards ?” “ Never,” was the answer. “ How differently am I treated,” said the traveller : “ When I come to visit my sheepfold, I take, as I am well entitled to do, the best lamb to myself ; and my ears are filled with the clamor of discontent by these ungrateful sheep, whom I have fed, watched and protected.” He looked up in amaze ; but the vision was fled.”

If it be proper to add any thing at all here, I can think of nothing better than the Epitaph of Mr. Wesley’s upon an infant child :—

“ When the Archangel’s trump shall blow,  
And souls to bodies join,  
What crowds shall wish their lives below,  
Had been as short as thine !”

## NUMBER XXXIII.

*Of maternal tenderness—or the sorrows of the daughter of Aiah.*

AMONGST the short but admirable sketches of nature which the historical part of the Sacred Volume furnishes, there is one that has been very little noticed; though had it been found in any other book of so early date, it would have been quoted, again and again, with peals of applause. It is recorded in the 21st chapter of the 2d book of Samuel, and consists of a simple unvarnished tale of maternal tenderness, taken from real life.

In the beginning of barley-harvest seven sons of Saul were hanged up, all together, and it was ordered that their dead bodies should remain upon the gallows or tree, exposed to the birds and the beasts of prey. Two of these young men were the sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, whose conduct on that distressing occasion is described as follows:—"And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

The sacred historian records this story as worthy of notice and remembrance, and, according to the usual manner of the penmen of the holy Bible, he merely records it; adding not a word of comment or a single reflection of his own. Indeed it is, of itself, a picture which needs no colouring, and which no art could improve.

What was the moral or religious character of Rizpah, we are not told. Her being called Saul's concu-

bine is no evidence that she was of an abandoned character ; for concubine probably means here, nothing more or worse than a wife of the secondary or subordinate rank, agreeably to the custom, tolerated, though not sanctioned, under the Mosaical dispensation. Nor do we know if the two unhappy sons had treated their mother at all with filial kindness. Considering that they were branches of Saul's ungracious house, the greater likelihood is that the mother had suffered many a pang from the churlishness of their behaviour. And be it even so, she but acted the genuine character of *Mother* when she forgot the undutifulness of her sons in the yearnings of her compassion.

If we except the few, in whose hearts natural affection has given place to the ambition of making a figure in the eyes of the public—maternal tenderness is of universal extent, unless in those benighted regions where it has been blighted by a horrible superstition. This species of affection is one of the primary qualities of human nature, and no talents or accomplishments can supply its place. It is one of the main pillars of our race, which, without it, would quickly tumble to ruin.

The child that has the mother with it, though born in the most abject condition of life, has one friend at least ; a friend who loves it as naturally as she loves herself, and guards and fosters it from the same powerful feelings of nature that she guards and fosters her own life. And what though, as to the greater part of mothers, the maternal tenderness partakes more of animal instinct than of any rational exercise of the mind ? What though it is so apt to run into a blind, excessive, and pernicious indulgence ? What though their misguided fondness for their infant progeny is aptly represented in the fable of the ape, that stifled her youngling with the vice-

lence of her embrace ?—All this, only shows that the gifts of nature are pervertible, and that ill may be educated from good. The affection itself, peculiar to the maternal bosom, is implanted by the hand of God : it is a precious part of female nature, and of immeasurable importance in its consequences.

As a celebrated writer remarks, “ The authority of a father, so useful to our well-being, and so justly venerable on all accounts, hinders us from having that entire love for him that we have for our mothers, where the paternal authority is melted down into the mother’s fondness and indulgence.”\*

Experience fully testifies to the truth of the above remark, and at the same time evinces the wisdom of the divine economy in this important particular. Filial affection, which is one of the most useful affections of our general nature, obtains its root and earliest growth from maternal tenderness. The fond and doting mother has our first love, which, by degrees, extends itself to the other parent. Whereas, but for the indulgent softness of female nature which so irresistibly attracts the affections of our infancy and early childhood, there would be much less, of pure unsophisticated filial love, than there now is in the world.

Alas for the conduct of those children who neglect their mother when she is old ! It manifests an unfeelingness of heart and brutality of disposition exceeding the ordinary bounds of human depravity.

While I am upon the subject of maternal tenderness I will notice one of the bitterest of the bitter drops in the cup of early widowhood : it is the loss of the only human being that can so naturally participate in her yearnings to her infant offspring. This is exquisitely

\* Burke.

expressed in one of the poems of Mrs. Opie, a young widowed mother.

“ When to my heart my child I fold,  
 She only deepens every sigh :  
 I think, while I her charms behold,  
 How she ’d have pleas’d her father’s eye.  
 And while I from her lisping tongue  
 Soft childhood’s artless accents hear,  
 I think, with vain remembrance wrung,  
 How she ’d have charm’d her father’s ear.”

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### NUMBER XXXIV.

*Of Prudence in the ordinary concerns of life.*

■ I Wisdom dwell with Prudence.”

AND what is this close inmate of wisdom ?—Not that niggardly, craving propensity, which occasions one to toil and moil like an emmet, without cessation, and without enjoyment—not that sordid disposition, which, appropriating every thing to *self*, withholds bread from the hungry—not the worldly spirit, that makes all its calculations with the sole view to present loss and gain—not the jealous temper that keeps, by day and night, a cat-like watch, and dares trust nobody—not the slyness that habitually prefers stratagem to openness of conduct—not the cowardice that shrinks from the responsibility, or the danger, to which duty calls.—Though, by a *moral* abuse of words, these, severally, have been dignified with the name of Prudence, they are very unlike that genuine prudence with which wisdom deigns to dwell.

Prudence of the right stamp, is the *practical* exposition both of a correct judgment and a correct heart. It regards the future, as well as the present; immor-

tality as well as time ; and each according to their respective importance. It seeks the attainment of worthy objects by worthy and suitable means. It keeps the end in view, and the means it properly adapts to the end. It shuns the evil that is avoidable, and what is unavoidable, it meets with resignation and firmness.

An ounce of genuine Prudence is worth a pound of unbridled Genius. What signifies fine sense, exalted sense, even the best *theoretical* sense in the world, if it produces worse than nonsense in *practice* ? What signifies it that one have great parts and great learning, united, if, notwithstanding, he acts the part of a fool ?

“ How empty learning, and how vain is art,  
Save where it guides the life, or mends the heart.”

Look at Bibulus, the most exalted, yet the most self-degraded of men ! Seemingly, he never *thinks* foolishly, nor ever *acts* wisely. Endowed with uncommon talents, and possessing the advantages of superior learning, his whole life, nevertheless, is a series of inconsistencies, errors and follies ; and all from the want of prudence, without which, no man is truly great, or can be useful to others, or even to himself.

Prudence, consists of soundness of judgment, together with firmness of resolution to follow the dictates of judgment. For want of such firm resolution, many act absurdly, though they speculate wisely ; being drawn astray, contrary to their better knowledge, by indolence, by timidity, by ungoverned passion, or by their propensities to particular ruinous vices.

Prudence, as particularly respects the concerns of this life, is a gift of Nature, distributed, like intellect, in different degrees among mankind. Some discover the rudiments of it even from childhood. Others are naturally rash, headstrong, and disposed to follow the impulse of the moment without either foresight or re-

flection ; till taught to their cost, and sometimes happily cured, in the school of experience. While others again, notwithstanding excellent advantages for learning discretion, continue, as to this particular, radically defective to the end of their lives. They have quickness of apprehension, readiness of wit, volubility of tongue, and besides, dame experience has severely disciplined them in her school. But all this notwithstanding, they still have the weakness of infancy in this particular ; in middle age, and even to old age, their minds are yet in the cradle.

But though the prudence of which I am now speaking is a natural gift, it is an improveable gift. Where there are any rudiments of it at all in the young mind, it may, by proper means, be strengthened and increased ; and it is one of the essential parts of education to lead the pupil into the habit of forethought and reflection, and to cultivate in him a sturdy growth of well-directed *Resoluteness* ; which, in fact, is a main pillar of the human heart. As many persons are imprudent for want of education, so, unquestionably, the ruinous imprudences of many others are owing to a perverted or unsound education ; an education that leads them to contemn the condition allotted to them by Providence, and to restless aspirations after one that is unattainable.

Some certain circumstances have been the means of imbuing a whole population with remarkable prudence continuing for ages. In Holcroft's Travels in Holland it is remarked : " The Dutchman, living in continual danger of inundation, and of losing, not only the fruits of his industry, but his life, becomes habitually prudent. His foresight is admirable, his perseverance not to be conquered, and his labours, unless seen, not to be believed." 'The Scotch, also, have, time out of mind,

been as it were inoculated with prudence, as relates to the various branches of economy ; and it is clearly accounted for from the peculiar circumstances of their history. In some other countries (unfortunately, in our own, for one instance) a concurrence of several extraordinary circumstances has occasioned very many thousands to be imprudent, rash, and desperately adventurous. And as on the large scale, so on the small ones : a sound education, correct habits, and a just way of thinking, in early life, generally lead to prudence of conduct in its following stages ; and so contrariwise.

One of the many important branches of prudence, is carefully to avoid incurring enmities, as far as can be done consistently with uprightness of character and a good conscience. For seldom does one *unnecessarily* make an enemy of his fellow creature but he finds cause to regret it afterwards ; and as seldom has one had reason to be sorry that he has used *the soft answer which turneth away wrath*. But instead of arguing this point, I will merely adduce a very curious and a very instructive specimen from the *Mémoirs of Franklin*.

“ In 1736,” observe the *Reviewers*, in the *Analectic Magazine*, “ Franklin was chosen clerk of the general assembly of Pennsylvania ;—his first promotion, as he calls it in his narrative. The choice was annual, and the year following, a new member made a long speech in opposition to his re-election. We copy what he relates on this occasion, because it is every way characteristic.”

“ As the place was highly desirable for me, on many accounts, I did not like the opposition of this new member, who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to give him in time great influence in the house, which indeed afterwards hap-

pened. I did not, however, aim at gaining his favor by paying any servile respect to him, but after some time took this other method. Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting that he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately; and I returned it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the house, he spoke to me, (which he had never done before,) and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim that I had learned, which says, 'he that has once done you a kindness, will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.' And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return and continue inimical proceedings."

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## NUMBER XXXV.

*Of the vast importance of Manner in giving Counsel and Reproof.*

'To exasperate is not the way to convince: nor does asperity of language or of manner necessarily belong to the duty of plain-dealing. So far otherwise, a scolding preacher, or a snarling reprobate, betrays alike a gross ignorance of the philosophy of the human mind, and the absence of christian meekness; and however

zealous be his aim to do good, the provokingness of his manner will defeat the benevolence of his intentions.

The following remarks are from the pen of a man as distinguished for christian piety, as for superior genius —the immortal Cowper. “ No man” (says that *evangelical* poet) “ was ever scolded out of his sins. The heart, corrupt as it is, and because it is so, grows angry if it be not treated with some management and good manners, and scolds again. A surly mastiff will bear perhaps to be stroked, though he will growl under that operation, but if you touch him roughly he will bite. There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than that of zeal. A man thinks he is fighting for Christ, when he is fighting for his own notions. He thinks that he is skilfully searching the hearts of others, when he is only gratifying the malignity of his own ; and charitably supposes his hearers destitute of all grace, that he may shine the more in his own eyes by comparison.”

Nor is either scolding or ridicule the proper way to cure men of their religious prejudices : for by inflaming their anger, it renders their prejudices the more stubborn and inveterate. It is no matter how absurd, or even how monstrous, their errors and prejudices be ; if you offend them by the grossness of your manner, there is little hope of your convincing them afterward by the cogency of your reasoning.

The Baptist Missionaries in India at the first insulted, as we are told, the superstition which they attacked, and ridiculed and reviled the Bramins in the streets, and at their festivals, when the passions of the blinded and besotted populace were most likely to be inflamed. But experience taught those pious and apostolical men that this was not the right way to make converts : for which reason, in 1805, they made a declaration of the

great principles upon which they thought it their duty to act. "It is necessary," say they, "in our intercourse with the Hindoos, that, as far as we are able, we abstain from those things which would increase their prejudices against the gospel. Those parts of English manners which are most offensive to them should be kept out of sight; nor is it advisable at once to attack their prejudices by exhibiting with acrimony the sins of their gods; neither should we do violence to their images, nor interrupt their worship."

Now if this forbearance from every thing provoking, whether in language or in manner, was expedient in dealing with the errors of the grossly idolatrous pagans, it is assuredly not less expedient for fellow christians, in their treatment of the real or supposed religious errors of one another. Bitter revilings and contumelious denouncements always provoke, but never convince. If they are used instead of argument, they betray a conscious weakness, for it is much easier to revile and denounce than to argue. And furthermore, we are quite as apt to be furiously in the wrong as to be furiously in the right: or if even we know ourselves to be right as to matter, we put ourselves in the wrong as to manner, if we make use of foul weapons, rather than those which the armory of reason supplies.

*Manner* is to be carefully studied by every one, whether in a public or a private station, who undertakes to reclaim the vicious, or convince the erring: for what would be beneficial if done in one manner, would be worse than labour lost if done in another. A haughty, supercilious manner never wins, seldom convinces, and always disgusts: whereas that which indicates meekness and unmixed benevolence and compassion, rarely fails of some salutary impression; especially if suavity of manner be accompanied with force of reasoning;

and a due regard be had to time, place, and circumstances.

No very long while ago, Mr. ——, an American clergyman, as distinguished, for pious zeal as for eminent parts, was passing a river in a ferry boat, along with company of some distinction, among which was a military officer, who repeatedly made use of profane language. Mr. —— continued silent till they had landed, when asking him aside, he expostulated with him in such a moving manner that the officer expressed his thanks, and his deep sorrow for his offence ; but added withal, “ *Sir, if you had reproved me before the company, I should have drawn my sword upon you.*”

There are some who glory in it, that by their plain-dealing they wound the pride of those they deal with. Peradventure with greater pride they do it. Often we are so little aware of the obliquities of our own hearts, that we may be feeding and nourishing pride within ourselves, whilst we are zealously aiming our blows at the pride of others. Our love of chiding, our coarse bluntness, which we fondly term an honest plain-heartedness, or warmth of zeal, may possibly spring from other motives than those of pure christian benevolence.

In the governance of children, very much indeed depends on *Manner*. If you provoke your children to anger, little will they regard, at the time, the wholesome counsel that is mingled with the provocation you give them. Reproof is ever as a bitter pill to the receiver, and when administered even to *children*, it must be done with visible marks of tender affection to sweeten it ; else it will be more likely to do harm than good.

## NUMBER XXXVI.

*Of Truth-speaking as denoting courage.*

“Dare to be true ; nothing can need a lie ;  
The fault that needs it most, grows two thereby.”

It requires no inconsiderable degree of courage always to speak the truth. And hence, in the 14th and 15th centuries, commonly termed the age of chivalry, the two points of honour, in the male sex, were Valour, and Veracity ; particularly a stedfast adherence to plighted faith, or one’s word and promise ; lying, or falsehood, being considered as indicative of cowardice, and abhorred rather for its meanness than for its moral turpitude. Accordingly, the chivalrous knights, whilst little regarding any part else of the second table of the holy decalogue, and least of all the *sixth, seventh and tenth* commandments, would, nevertheless, suffer any pains and penalties in preference to the imputation of word-breaking, lying, or prevarication. In the old Romance, *Amadis de Gaul*, king Lisuarte being reduced to the dire alternative of breaking his word, or delivering up his daughter into the hands of an utter stranger ; he is represented as exclaiming, “My daughter must fare as God hath appointed ; but my word shall never be wilfully broken.”

The age of chivalry is long since past ; but some of its relics have floated down the stream of time, and are visible even at the present instant. In some of the high circles of fashion, as well among descendants of Europeans in other countries, as in Europe itself, Valour and Veracity are considered not merely as indispensable requisites of a gentleman, but as almost the

only points of honour that are necessary to his character. A man may be a blasphemer of God and religion, a notorious profligate, an inmate of the brothel, a seducer of female virtue ; he may be all this, and yet rank high as a gentleman ; he may be all this, and yet be received into what fashion calls *good company*, with as cordial welcome as if his character were white as the driven snow. But if he lie under the imputation either of direct cowardice, or of the indirect cowardice of uttering a wilful falsehood, he is despised, banished, and proscribed, as unfit for the company of ladies and gentlemen. For which reason, a man of this sort of high fashion, when charged directly or by implication, of being a coward, or a liar, finds his chivalrous spirit roused, and lifted to the highest pitch. Call him a foe to God, a debauchee, a violator of the connubial ties, and he is able to laugh it off ; for it does in no wise touch his honour : but call him a coward, or a liar, and he thinks nothing but your blood can wash away the stain.

Apart, however, from the notions of chivalry, the vice of lying ranks among the meanest of vices. It is the vice of slaves. It is the vice that chiefly abounds among nations in political slavery, and with that low and wretched class of our fellow beings who are in personal bondage. Slavish fear prompts them to prevaricate and lie, as it were in self-defence. Nor is it the less mean for its becoming an attribute of freemen. Its meanness, as well as its guilt, is increased by this circumstance ; since, in the last case, there is far less urgency of temptation, and a far clearer knowledge of duty. Assuredly, with people possessing freedom and enjoying the light of christianity, a strict regard to truth should be considered as a cardinal point in character, and every species of wilful falsehood should be

held in utmost disgrace ; nor merely in disgrace for its meanness, but in abhorrence for its moral turpitude.

Though, as I observed before, it requires courage to speak the truth at all times, and under all circumstances, yet this sort of courage is of no difficult attainment in the school of christian morals. And, as to the rest, speaking the truth, is one of the easiest things in the world : for it is merely the expression of one's own perceptions, or of what lies clearly in his memory. The veriest child, that has attained the use of the organs of speech, is capable of this.—Whereas to speak falsehood, requires effort and art. Falsehood is *fiction*, and needs invention and contrivance, so to frame and fashion it as to make it bear the semblance of truth. As he that dances upon the rope is not a moment at his ease, but must constantly employ effort to keep his balance, even so it fares with a liar. His mind is ever on the alert to escape detection. And after all, the very expedients he uses for this end, often produce the consequences which he wishes to avoid. He proceeds, with cunning art, to cover one lie with another, till at last, the cover being too narrow or too thin, the whole series is clearly seen through.

I will only remark further, that lying, even in its simplest and most inoffensive forms, is by no means free of all mischief. Confidence is the cement, or rather the main pillar of society. Without it friendship is but a name, and social intercourse a sort of war in disguise. And as falseness of speech, in any shape or degree whatever, has a tendency to destroy or weaken social confidence, so it tends, of course, to unhinge society. From this, as well as from the more solemn and more awful view of the subject, it clearly follows that nothing scarcely is of greater necessity in the moral education of children, than to learn them betimes to pay a strict regard to truth.

## NUMBER XXXVII.

*Of Vulgarity.*

THERE are but few words in our language that have a more grating sound in the ears of those who lay claim to good breeding, than the word Vulgarity, insomuch that many a one had rather be thought vicious than vulgar.—And what is vulgarity? This is rather a puzzling question: for the word is no where clearly defined, nor is it capable of being exactly marked out by a definition. Profaneness, filthiness of speech, and a clownish awkwardness of manners withal, are only the grosser parts of vulgarity, which extends itself to almost innumerable particulars of human conduct, and not unfrequently into the fashionable ranks of society. But though it is in a manner undefinable, it admits of being explained as it were by piecemeal; and this may be the better done by contrasting it with a quality, which every body, of any decency of mind and character, professes to hold in respect.

Vulgarity, then, is the direct opposite of Courteousness. But here, again, arises a question, *What is courteousness?* Your dictionary will tell you it implies something elegant—something beyond the reach of plain men and women of the common sort. But so it is not. When St. Paul, addressing himself to Christians of all worldly grades and classes, even down to slaves or menial servants; when addressing himself to the lowest as well as to the highest, he bade them *be courteous*, assuredly he did not mean that they must needs all be of elegant manners. No: it is full likely that Paul himself did not excel greatly in that particular: it was not, surely, the *elegance* of his manner that

made Felix tremble. Courteousness, must mean therefore, a something which is within the reach of all sorts of people ; and, in its primary and best sense, it may be understood to mean exactly such a behaviour as spontaneously springs from a heart warm with benevolence :—whilst, on the contrary, vulgarity, as respects people of some rank in life, is the growth of cold selfishness always, and often, of selfishness and narrowness of intellect combined. Vulgarity, in some shape or other, betrays itself as clearly at the very top, as at the very bottom of the scale of life.

Cardinal de Retz, remarks of Cardinal Richlieu, a most puissant prime minister of France, that “ he loved to rally others, but could not bear to be rallied himself.” So, also, it is said of the Great Frederick of Prussia, that his manner was to harrow up the feelings of his courtiers and attendants by breaking his cutting jokes upon them without measure or mercy ; well knowing that they durst not offer any retort. These two instances clearly show that vulgarity may be found in the palace, as well as in the cottage. The like may be frequently seen among the *little* great ; many of whom take a delight in wounding the feelings of those below them, merely because they *are* below them : a scurvy fault, which *sudden* wealth, or *sudden* consequence of any kind, is peculiarly apt to draw after it. I say, a scurvy fault, because nothing scarcely betrays a more reprobate heart, than an unfeeling, brutal conduct toward inferiors ; as it usually springs from the odious compound of arrogance, vanity, and cowardice.

We have no more right, wantonly or causelessly, to wound the mind than to wound the body of a fellow being ; and, in many instances, the former is the more cruel of the two.

Some persons, even in the blessed deed of giving

alms to the needy, poison the gift by an ungracious manner of bestowment, accompanying it with a sour look, or peradventure with a bitter taunt. One of the wisest of the ancients noticed this species of vulgarity, and reproved it with the sound words following : “ My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest any thing.”

There are some again, both men and women, who value themselves highly upon a coarse bluntness, which they themselves call downright honesty and plainheartedness. “ *We* can’t flatter, not *we*—*we* must speak truth—if they will take it—so—if not—*we’re* plain.”†

But hark’ e ! not so fast. Pause a moment, and examine your own hearts, and perchance you may find that your manner partakes more of pride, or sourness, than of benevolence. If you wish to amend the faulty, assuredly this is not the way. Again, have you no faults at all of your own ? Hardly will you pretend to absolute immunity in that respect. Well, then, ask your own hearts if you are willing to receive the same measure which you mete out to others. If you can bear, in all cases, to be told roundly of your own faults, even the minutest of them, then, and not otherwise, you may seem fairly entitled to the privilege of giving it off so roundly to others. Then, and not otherwise, may you be at liberty to deal out your bitter pills, without any regard at all to gilding or sweetening them.

In short, (for many things must I leave unsaid) any body that knows the world, might easily show that the family of the *Vulgars* is branched out into a great many divisions and subdivisions ; one or other of which, embraces not a few, who would be very loth to own themselves members of that unhonoured household.

† Shakspeare.

## NUMBER XXXVIII.

*Of the very great influence of Use or Custom, as respects Children, upon their dispositions and characters in after-life.*

“ Just as the twig is bent the tree ’s inclin’d.”

POPE.

It can hardly be imagined, how much we are under the power of custom : it binds and fixes our inclination in almost any direction. That which we are accustomed to, almost whatever it be, acquires our attachment, and we are uneasy without it. If our customary food have been plain, simple, or never so coarse, it is sweet to our relish : on the other hand, if we have been accustomed altogether to dainties, we shall feel a kind of loathing for the ordinary provisions of the human kind. The *Black Broth* of the Spartans, (they being always used to it,) was, to them, delicious, though loathsome to every body else.

I once dined at an inn, in company with a lady who had “ fared sumptuously every day.” It was a plain dinner, and substantially good, but not such as she had been accustomed to ; and the very sight of it threw her into tragical distress. She was not hectical, nor in any manner sickly. Her form was the index of nothing less than of habitudes of abstemiousness. But, alas ! her stomach turned against every thing. She barely tasted of this, of that, and of the other morsel, and laying down her knife and fork, her visage could scarcely have been more rueful had she been under the hands of the executioner.

Man is said to be “ a bundle of habits.” And what is habit ? Habit is the aptitude we acquire for what we

are accustomed to ; whether it relates to the body, or the mind, or both. As by frequency of repetition we come to be more ready and expert in whatever we have to do ; so, also, by frequency of repetition, the appetite, the taste, the inclination, acquire a settled direction that way. Nay, if the thing we are accustomed to gives us little or no pleasure, its absence gives us pain.

“ I remember,” says the far-famed Burke, “ to have frequented a certain place every day, for a long time together ; and I may truly say, that so far from finding pleasure in it, I was affected with a sort of weariness and disgust ; I came, I went, I returned, without pleasure ; yet if by any means I passed by my usual time of going thither, I was remarkably uneasy, and was not quiet till I got into my old track.”—And he proceeds to say, “ They who use snuff take it almost without being sensible that they take it, and the acute sense of smell is deadened so as to feel hardly any thing from so sharp a stimulus ; yet, deprive the snuff-taker of his box, and he is the most uneasy mortal in the world.”

It might indeed be shown, in a great variety of instances, some of an indifferent, and others of a moral nature, that being accustomed to a thing, induces, for the most part, such a settled habit as is aptly denominated a second nature. But my object is to apply the general principle to the all important concern of education.

Training up a child in the way he should go, consists not altogether in pointing out the way, but also, and chiefly, in accustoming him to walk therein. As the tree grows up straight, or crooked, according to the direction given it when a plant, so, in a great measure, it is with animal nature. Of this truth we are deeply sensible, in its application to the inferior animals, and our practice accords with our way of thinking. In

training up young animals for use, a colt, for instance, or one of the canine breed, much care is taken to break them betimes of their faults, and to render them docile, and such as we wish them to be at mature age. Because experience teaches us, that if their faults are permitted to grow up with them, they will become inveterately fixed, and exceeding hard to cure. We know that if the one be suffered to kick, and the other to snarl and bite, at every body that comes near them, or if any other scurvy trick be permitted to "grow with their growth"; it would be unreasonable to expect to fashion them aright in after-time, when age shall have matured and confirmed their ill habits, and redoubled their obstinacy. Rightly judging on this point, we are *practical*, because, forsooth, it would be a pity the young animal should be spoiled for want of attention to his breeding.

How much less care in this respect, is ordinarily paid to the breeding of the human offspring! Not that we are sparing of pains and expense for the purpose of imbuing the young mind with the rudiments of learning. But having done this, we unscrupulously leave undone a still more important part, namely, the care to settle those habits, without which the possession of learning can turn to no good account.

It is foolish to expect that children accustomed to do evil, will, in after-life, learn to do well; no less foolish than to look for the growth of a fragrant flower in the spot where you had dropped only the seed of a thistle. For the generality of human beings are, throughout life, such, or nearly such, as early custom had fashioned them; no animal being more wilful, more obstinate in the wrong, or harder to be cured of the ill habits which early custom had rivetted.

Consider it, ye, who are parents of young children.

If it be your choice that they should be idle men and women, rear them up in idleness. If you would render them helpless all their days, never compel nor permit them to help themselves. If you wish them to be fastidious and squeamish about their food, feed them daily with dainties. If you would have them gormands, cram their little bodies well, from morn to eve. If you would entail upon their mature age various ill humor, as sullenness and obstinacy, mustiness and peevishness ; indulge and foster betimes these wayward propensities. If you admire a quarrelsome, a violent, a revengeful spirit, permit their little hands to strike, and their little tougues to lisp out rage ; it can do no harm, and is fine sport to see it ! Again, if you would breed them up for cheats and liars, laugh at their cunning tricks, their artful falsehoods and equivocations ; or, if you rebuke them, let them see withal that you are more pleased with their wit than displeased at the in-eceptive marks of their depravity.

But if your desires and wishes be quite the reverse of all this ; why then, take care against learning your children, what it will be necessary for them to unlearn at a riper age. Take care to make such impressions on their tender infancies as you would wish should be permanent and lasting. Never let it be out of your memories, that “ habits woven into the very principles of their nature are unspeakably better than mere rules and lessons, which they so easily forget.”

## NUMBER XXXIX.

*Of the advantages of the long-protracted weakness and dependance of childhood.*

THERE are none of the inferior animals that come into the world so helpless and continue helpless for so great a length of time, as the human progeny. The younglings of the lower part of the animal creation are endowed with strength and activeness, and, in many instances, with a sagacity that astonishes the beholder and sets his philosophy at defiance. Very shortly they quit the dam and become their own providers. But the infant is puling in the mother's arms for many months, and dependant on parental care for as many years.

Is this remarkable circumstance in the economy of our nature, meant to be a burden, or a blessing? A blessing doubtless. Because, in the helpless condition of the infant, which continues so long dependant on others, is laid the groundwork of the social ties. We learn first to shew kindness at home. It is there that the social principles of our nature ordinarily are first put in exercise and drawn forth into practice.

The keystone of the fabric of society is laid in marriage, and the strong pillars of the superstructure are established in infancy. The helpless progeny—for a long while helpless—incessantly occupy the kind attentions of the parents, who are the more attached to their fondlings from the very circumstance of their impotent weakness and utter dependance. The mother in particular, how cheerfully she foregoes her accustomed amusements and pastimes, and how constantly she confines herself to the charge of her infantile brood.

With what unspeakable tenderness does she nourish and cherish them, and watch over them, day and night. With what heartfelt joy does she perceive in them the dawning of reason, and listen to their lisping prattle. And if too discreet to blaze abroad their little feats of activity, their pertinent questions, and their witty remarks—so much beyond the ordinary condition of their age—yet all these she treasures up in her heart :—and in that fond heart are continually blooming new prospects, new hopes, and new joys.

The affection of parents for their infantile progeny, is a species of affection that belongs to our universal nature. Whether in the civilized or in the savage state, in every clime, and among all the tribes of man, parents love their children. This primary human affection was exercised as soon as men began to multiply upon the earth. Ever since that period, it has been a ruling passion, every where, and under all the different modifications of society ; and though, strictly speaking, it is not of itself a moral virtue, yet to be without it, is to be a monster.

On the other hand, the long term of the infantile, dependant, condition of children, is what chiefly generates filial affection, accompanied with respect, reverence, and obedient dispositions. What if the human offspring, like the young partridge or quail, could shift for themselves almost as soon as born ? What if they could presently become their own protectors and their own providers ? Small, if any, would be their regard for their parents : feeble, if any, would be the ties of filial love. But, by means of their long condition of dependance and tutelage, there are superinduced in their minds sentiments and habits of love, respect and submissiveness :—sentiments and habits, which seldom

wear off in the succeeding periods of life, but are carried into society with unspeakable benefit.

On the same ground rests the whole fabric of education. The child, conscious of weakness and utmost dependance, finds none on earth to look to for protection, food and raiment, but the tender and ever attentive parents ; who, of course, in *his* estimation, are of pre-eminent wisdom and worth. Hence he receives their instructions into willing ears, hearkens to their advice, and treasures up their precepts in his memory. In their hands he is capable, in some important respects, of being moulded like soft wax.

Thus every family is of itself a little government. Every family is, also, a little academy, in which education, good or ill, has its beginning. Clusters of families form a particular society ; and clusters of societies form a commonwealth or nation, which is exalted by righteousness, or debased by vice, in proportion as the discipline of the general mass of the families that compose it, is good or bad.

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#### NUMBER XL.

*Of the moral benefits accruing to parents by means of the good instruction they give their children.*

THE benefits resulting to children from a due attention to their early instruction in the rudiments of learning and virtue, have frequently been the subject of able pens. Both in prose and in verse they have been described so clearly and with so much fulness, that it would be difficult to add to what is written already;

But it has been too little considered, of what unspeakable benefit good family instruction is to parents themselves.

He that is teaching another, is teaching himself : and more especially is it so in a moral point of view. Those attentions which parents employ in the moral and religious instruction of their offspring, have a powerful tendency toward guarding and strengthening their own moral and religious feelings and habits. Hardly can they, in serious earnest, dehort their children from vice without experiencing an increase of resolution to guard against it in their own lives : or earnestly inculcate upon them the necessity of virtuous conduct, without acquiring an increase of desire and of carefulness to act virtuously themselves. They must needs be sensible that example has more influence on the young mind than precept, and that their good precepts will be thrown away unless they be careful to exemplify them in their domestic life and habits. They cannot but be conscious that their own example has a most powerful and decided influence in training up their children to honour or disgrace, to happiness or misery : and consequently they have, in their children, a constant stimulation to a virtuous, respectable course of behaviour.

While your attention is daily employed in training up your child in the way he should go, you are at the same time nurturing in yourself the things that are virtuous and lovely ; you are ameliorating your own temper and disposition ; and are attaining a double security against aught, of word or act, that has the appearance of vice, or even of indecorum. So true is it, that your daily efforts to render your example worthy of the imitation of your child, are daily remunerated, richly remunerated, by the benefits resulting from it, to the

frame of your moral nature, independently of the benefits accruing to the child. Nor would it be hazarding too much to say, that the parents who had discharged the parental duties faithfully and discreetly, never yet failed of reaping, to themselves, an amount of profit far exceeding all the pains, even though the welfare of their children were altogether out of the question.

The scene of marriage was originally laid not amongst "the thorns and thistles" of the curse, but in the blissful abodes of paradise. The first divine benediction was pronounced upon the conjugal union of man and woman: and in no wise is it evincive of the narrowness of superstition to indulge a religious belief, that virtuous marriage has, generally, in some respect or other, been crowned with the blessing of God, from the time it was first consummated in the Garden, up to the present day.

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise, that has surviv'd the fall!  
Thou art the nurse of virtue."—

A well chosen conjugal relation, tends to smooth the natural asperities of man, to soften his manners, to sweeten his temper, and to expand his heart. The bachelor thinks of *himself*; the married man of his *family*. The former becomes the more selfish, by reason that he has none but self to look after and provide for; the latter, the more benevolent, for his having a wife and offspring dependant upon the daily kindnesses of his attentions. Having learnt first to shew kindness at home, he is the better disposed and qualified to extend the charities of life, to those about him in the circle of society. Other things being equal, the single circumstance of his having a family of his own, as it connects him more closely with society, so it renders

him a more feeling, a more beneficent, and a more estimable member of it.\*

It is agreeable to the order of nature that we learn first to shew kindness at home, and to those near about us ; that we regard, in the first place, the little parcels of human beings with whom we are the most intimately connected—our families, our near kindred, our neighbours and familiar acquaintances. The daily exercise of practical benevolence toward these, has a tendency to expand our hearts, and to replenish them with humane sentiments towards the rest of our fellow beings. The braggart philosophers of modern time inverted this order of nature, and by means of that inversion, they made philanthropy to be a mere ideal phantom, instead of a practical principle. Under the pretence of embracing the whole human species alike in the bonds of affection, they left no room in their hearts for any individuals of that species—not even for those who were nearest them in blood. Rousseau, the apostle, if not the father, of this counterfeit philanthropy, turned his own infant children (all of spurious birth however) into a foundling hospital ; and never afterward, as it has been said, took the least notice of them, or so much as enquired about their welfare. Rousseau loved every body *collectively*, but nobody *particularly* : he was an enthusiastic friend of the human race considered as a whole ; but there was not perhaps any individual of that race, or scarcely one, that he would have put himself out of his way to serve.

\* I would by no means be understood to mean here, or indeed any where, that there are not a great many very excellent and highly respectable persons, of both sexes, unmarried, though arrived to a late period of life :—I say, of *both* sexes ; for the Ridicule, which the coarse vulgarity of former ages, and even of the last age, was so perpetually casting upon the whole class of females termed *Old Mauds*, was no less unjust and senseless, than unmanly and brutal.

## NUMBER XLI.

*On the condition of old age—with directions for lightening its burden.*

We are naturally desirous of long life, and yet are unwilling to be old ; agedness being regarded by us as the most dreary period of our earthly existence, not only as it borders upon the grave, but also by reason of the grievous infirmities with which it is so commonly visited. It is affecting to contemplate the ruins of art, the once superb palaces and cities of antiquity lying in unsightly rubbish ; it is more affecting still to contemplate the ruins of that curious workmanship of nature, the human body ; and most affecting is it of all to contemplate the ruins of *Mind*.

In the life of the dean of St. Patrick's, Dr. Swift, the following anecdote is peculiarly affecting. That celebrated genius, for a considerable time had anticipated with anguish the calamity that befel him in the loss of his mental faculties. Not long before the calamity came upon him, he was riding out in the company of a number of ladies and gentlemen. On a sudden he put spurs to his horse, and rode forward till he was out of sight of his companions ; who, when they came up, found him, upon his knees, under an aged oak, whose upper branches were dry and sapless while the stock was yet green. Upon being questioned about the singularity of his conduct in that instance, he replied, he had been making his fervent supplications to God, that he himself might not, like the tree he was under, be withered at the top.

There is often a *premature* decay in mind. Ere the corruptible body stoops with age, the immortal part

shows evident signs of impairment. It not only grows forgetful, but feebler in intellect ; and this not unfrequently happens to persons well-informed and of excellent intellectual faculties. In so far as it comes by the immediate act of God, or from contingencies which cannot be prevented nor foreseen, it is a calamity that we can only deplore with humble reverence of the righteous hand that inflicts it. But, in most cases, it is owing to preventible causes ; such as intemperate drinking, gluttony, debauchery, and the general train of kindred vices, which war against the whole man, and bring both the body and the mind to premature decay and ruin. But not to speak of the causes which are so well known and so generally acknowledged, I will mention one that has been little noticed—*it is the habitual dereliction, or inaction, of our rational faculties.*

Intellect often degenerates for want of exercise. Mental exercise is no less necessary for sustaining the faculties of the mind, than is corporeal exercise to the vigour and alertness of the body. Nothing so much strengthens the memory as the frequent employment of it, by which it gains strength as it were mechanically ; whereas, on the other hand, habitual disuse never fails to abate its power. Also, our Reason, is a faculty, to which exercise gives developement, growth, and strength. We learn to reason by reasoning, as we learn to walk by walking. As one whose limbs have for a long time been confined and motionless, loses, in some degree, the power of walking, so one who suffers his faculty of reason to remain inactive, loses in some degree, the power of reasoning. Moreover, even Speech is lost by long disuse. Some who had, for several years, been in a condition of solitude and utter seclusion from the company of fellow beings, were, when first restored to society, unable to articulate their

mother tongue. Such, in particular, was the case of Alexander Selkirk, whose real history is veiled under the fictitious but pleasing tale of Robinson Crusoe.

Now it is obvious, that age naturally delights in repose; in a condition of quiet, both of body and mind; of quiet bordering on inaction. It is visited with the feeling of lassitude not easily overcome; for which reason, the most of those whose prime had been spent in vigorous labour of thought, do, in the evening of life, remit this labour, considerably or altogether, and their minds fail for lack of exercise.

It is further obvious to remark, that age seldom enjoys an equal participation in social intercourse. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The mind can doze over a book, but engaging conversation arouses its dormant powers, and tends, more perhaps than any thing else, to give it tone and tension. But a great many of the aged are solitary and desolate. The companions of their youth, and of even their riper years, are mostly gone, and they have found none to supply their places. Living as it were alone in the world, their minds are no longer expanded and quickened by a living intercourse with society.

If the topics which have now been merely suggested, were considered in all their bearings and consequences, it would, I conceive, appear, at least as a probable fact, that the imbecility of minds once strong, is more frequently the effect of their own torpid inaction, than of the impairing hand of time.

To those who wish for the prolongation of their rational faculties (and who would not wish it?) I will venture to suggest the following short hints.

1. "Be temperate in all things"—in your desires, as well as in your enjoyments.

2. Cultivate contentment and cheerfulness of temper.

“A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine.” Like a medicine it harmonizes and invigorates the body and the mind ; while morbid melancholy and peevishness powerfully tend to impair both.

3. So educate and so train up your children, if children you have, that they will likely be not only the props, but the delightful companions, of your old age.

4. When the years draw nigh, or are actually come, in which the hand of time begins to bear hard upon you, beware of sinking into mental torpitude or inaction : by reading and contemplation, exercise daily the faculties of memory, of reason, and of judgment.

5. Neither withdraw from society, nor give society occasion to withdraw from you. As fast as the friends of your youth drop away by death, make to yourselves other friends from among the succeeding generations. It is not good that the old should consort with none but the old ; it tends to deepen the shade of the gloomy valley which they are passing through, and to accelerate the impairment of their minds. The company and conversation of the young, nay even the prattle of little children, is animating to well-tempered age : and, on the other hand, age that carries with it experience and good information, and possesses a due mixture of pleasant humour with becoming gravity, has it in its power to please, as well as to profit, the decent and ingenuous part of younger society.

In conclusion : Lay hold of Wisdom as the only sure anchor of age. “In her right hand is length of days.” The firm belief and steadfast practice of our holy religion, as it yields the consolation of hope, which, as to the aged, can no longer spring from the prospect of earthly enjoyments ; so it tends, much every way, to invigorate the understanding, and to preserve it from decay.

## NUMBER XLII.

*Of the silly quarrel between a venerable old couple  
about a little goat.*

TOBIT of old, and his wife Anna, unluckily fell into a tough quarrel upon the question, how she came by the kid that he heard bleating in his house.\* He, very uncourteously accused her of stealing it ; while she, in return, broadly hinted that, notwithstanding his pretensions, he was no better than he should be. *Behold, thou and all thy works are known.*

“ The tongue can no man tame.” And besides, it is agreeable to the laws of pneumatics, that the lightest bodies should rise the highest, especially in a tempest. Wherefore, in spite of the degrading subjection in which the wife was held under the husband in that age and country, Anna had the last word ;—and a cutting word it was. Poor Tobit, it seems, had more than his match ; for the retort that his rib made upon him, was so keenly sarcastic, and touched him so deep, that he fell a weeping. Indeed he was not much to be pitied, as he was manifestly the aggressor. Had he patiently enquired into the matter, instead of blurting out his provoking suspicions, the bitter fray between them had never been.

This apocryphal text, which, peradventure, was never treated of so formally and methodically before, embraces several points of sound and wholesome doctrine.

1. The serenity of connubial life is very apt to be disturbed by sudden and unexpected gusts, unless special care be taken in this particular. If both be of a mild and even temper, there is no danger ; or, if one

\* 2 Chap. of the Apocryphal book of Tobit.

be so, and the other hasty, the danger is not so great : but if both be inflammable, there is need of the utmost watchfulness. A couple, so tempered, may, notwithstanding, be faithful, generous, noble-spirited and kind-hearted, and may live together very lovingly in the main ; but if they fail to keep a sharp look-out, now and then a gust arises, all of a sudden, and quite unexpected to themselves, and the house is made to ring from side to side. Some one, in his speculations upon this subject, has recommended it, that a hasty couple should accustom themselves, ere they fly into a passion with one another, to utter in their hearts, thrice, the three following cooling words—**BEAR AND FORBEAR.**

2. The most part of domestic feuds, perhaps nine in ten, spring from trifles. “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth !” A word unfitly spoken, a sour look, a neglect, touches and stings the mind and sometimes fires the tongue, and occasions a boisterous dispute ; even though neither party can accuse or blame the other, in any matters of considerable moment. For the prevention of this kind of domestic evil, permit me to offer the following recipe :—“The Jesuits,” according to an Italian author—“the Jesuits, with whom none could vie in the pleasures of civil life, were exceedingly attentive to appear to each other in the most amiable light. The polite behaviour of the first day was uniformly preserved by them during the many years they continued together ; so, that the honeymoon of their consociation, if this expression may be allowed, lasted for their lives. This reciprocal complaisance, at first merely adopted, was improved, by habit, into a solid, uninterrupted and happy friendship.”

The application is obvious.—Go, and do likewise.

3. As amongst neighbours, so in domestic or conjugal life, sharp contentions arise from judging of mat-

ters prematurely, or before they have been duly investigated and weighed. In this respect, Tobit was sadly out of the way. He should have questioned Anna, mildly, about the bleating kid ; asking her, in a pleasant tone, how and whence it came : and, if not satisfied with her answers, he should have searched elsewhere for the truth. But no : Such was the flurry of his spirits, that he acted with as much assurance and decision upon a mere impression as if he had had proof positive. Neither is this a solitary instance : the like has often happened, to the great discomfiture of social and domestic life. It ought to be deeply engraven on the mind and memory of man and woman, that, “ he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

4. In the state of matrimony, hardly any thing is more discomforting, or more deadening to the delicate affection of love, than overmuch suspiciousness of temper.—Groundless suspicions, repeatedly manifested, never fail to cool the love and excite the ire of the suspected party. And here again, Tobit deserves the lash of severe censure. He acted the part of a suspicious husband. And no wonder that Anna, an honest as well as industrious housewife—no wonder that she was stung to the quick at being suspected of so heinous an offence. It is no wonder that her spirits were aroused, and being well-gifted in that particular, that she played it off with her tongue in the able manner she did.

One thing more, and I shall have done. Let no man take occasion from this subject to ridicule or despise marriage. It has passed into a proverbial saying, that there are but few happy matches : and, in one sense, it is true. There are few, in comparison of the whole, who are *very* happy in marriage. But permit me to ask, Are there a great many that are *very* happy in the

single condition ? Is the Bachelor entitled to glory in his choice, or to boast of a superior degree of felicity ? He, who has no one that naturally cares for his person — no one that takes a lively interest in his concerns — no one that participates of his feelings of joy, or deeply sympathizes in his adversities, sicknesses and sorrows — no tenderly-throbbing bosom, on which to rest his weary head.

On the reverse of this picture, behold the married man. Perhaps his spouse is not, in some respects, quite as he would wish. Perhaps she has turns of unpleasant humour, and sometimes gives him pain by her peevishness or obstinacy. Yet she is faithful to his bed, and to his interests. Though, at times, she herself spars him with her tongue, *on no account will she suffer any body else to do it.* His joys and his sorrows are hers. In his out-goings, her heart blesses him ; and after weeks or days of absence, she affectionately greets him on his return. His food, his apparel, the decencies of his appearance, are objects of her daily attention. His every ailment of body, meets her sympathy and quickens her care. In his heavy sicknesses, scarcely does she give sleep to her eyes, or slumber to her eye-lids.

“ With a soft and silent tread,  
Nimble she moves about the bed.”

Anxiously she watches the symptoms ; carefully she administers the medicines ; she responds to every groan, and with eagerness catches at every glimmer of hope.

Judge now, which of the two is the happier man.

## NUMBER XLIII.

*Of friendship and the choice of friends.*

“ Give me the man, whose liberal mind  
Means general good to all mankind ;  
Who, when his friend, by fortune’s wound,  
Falls, tumbling headlong to the ground,  
Can meet him with a warm embrace,  
And wipe the tears from off his face.”

In the choice of friends, considerable regard is to be had to the qualities of the *head*, but a much greater still to those of the *heart* ; for if that be radically wanting in integrity and honour, the more alluring is every thing else in personal character, the more dangerous. Cataline, with the worst of hearts, was possest of personal accomplishments in a transcendent degree. He had the art of accomodating his manners and conversation to people of all tempers and ages. Cicero said of him, *He lived with the sad severely, with the cheerful agreeably, with the old gravely, with the young pleasantly.* All-accomplished as he was, the viciousness of his moral character was manifold the more seductive, contagious, and pernicious to community at large, and to the young especially. He easily insinuated himself into the friendship of the Roman youth, whom he corrupted and ruined.

Close intimacies, suddenly formed, often end in disappointment and disgust, and to the injury of one or other of the parties. It is a dangerous imprudence to trust any one as a friend, without good evidence of his being trust-worthy ; without good evidence that he has neither a treacherous heart, a fickle temper, nor a babbling tongue. Often, very often, have the young, of

both sexes, smarted under the consequences of such imprudence.

Equality in point of external circumstances, is not always a necessary preliminary to intimate and permanent friendship. The Friendship between David and Jonathan, for unshaken fidelity and sublime ardour, has scarcely a parallel in history; yet the one was a shepherd of mean rank, whilst the other was of blood royal, and heir apparent to a throne. But though it is not always necessary that two close friends should be about equal in their worldly conditions, it is necessary that their deeds and offices of kindness be reciprocal; else one becomes a *patron*, and the other a *dependant*. If one be greatly outdone by his friends in acts of kindness, or receive benefits at their hands which he can never in any wise repay, they will regard him as their debtor on the score of friendship, and he himself must be wounded with the mortifying consciousness of bankruptcy in that respect. Hence there have been instances of proud-hearted men becoming the enemies, and even the destroyers, of their greatest benefactors, in order to rid themselves of a burdensome debt of gratitude.

One should be careful to shew as much fidelity, as much attention, as much kindness to his friend, as he would require of him in similar circumstances.

Between frail, imperfect creatures, there cannot be perfect friendship; and when one discards a friend for some trifling negligence, for an ungracious expression, or for his not having added the hundredth, to his ninety-nine obliging acts; he is not worthy of having a friend, nor can he have one long.

It has been said that warm friends make warm enemies; but it is seldom so, except in cases of flagrant infidelity on the one side or the other. The truth is,

very warm friendships, (unless in the domestic state) are rarely lasting, by reason that they are above the ordinary tone of human nature ; and therefore require much attention and a constant exchange of obliging offices, to keep them good. Whenever attention abates on one side or the other, such friendship experiences a chill, and gradually cools down at length to indifference ; but no positive enmity necessarily follows.

The friendship between persons notoriously wicked, (if friendship it may be called,) naturally turns to fear. As they know they cannot trust one another, so they constantly harbour a mutual jealousy, bordering upon, and often ending in, downright hatred.

There is too much truth, generally speaking, in the following lines of Goldsmith :

“ And what is friendship but a name,  
A charm that lulls to sleep ;  
A shade that follows wealth or fame,  
But leaves the wretch to weep.”

When a man falls into misfortune, it often happens that some of those he had most befriended while in prosperity, are the first to forsake, and even to censure and reproach him. The reason is plain : they forsake him because they think him a pigeon no longer worth the plucking ; and they reproach him to balance old scores.

The book in the world that best unfolds the human heart, is the Bible. There we find a man, of vast substance ; as liberal as he was rich, and as pious as liberal. A man who was “ eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame ;” who “ was a father to the poor ;” and whose charitable hand and consoling voice “ made the widow’s heart sing for joy. While “ the candle of the Lord shined upon his head,” unbounded respect was paid him. The old as well as young, princes and nobles as well as peasants, did him obeisance. He had friends with

out number ; *close friends*—friends fixedly determined never to forsake him in ~~his~~ *prosperity*.

With unerring aim, and to answer the mysterious purposes of infinite wisdom, heaven's arrow was pointed at the bosom of this very man. In a single hour he fell from the height of prosperity to the lowest depths of human wretchedness. Bereft of all his children at a stroke, reduced to poverty and need, covered from head to foot with disease, he sat upon the ground ;—left there to weep his woes by himself. His friends, as well as his fortune had left him. They stood aloof, and with scorn rather than commiseration, eyed him afar off. He called after them—*Have pity upon me ! have pity upon me !*—but called in vain. Even the very few that drew near, *ostensibly* to comfort him, did but add grief to his sorrow. With rugged hands and unfeeling hearts, they tore yet wider his bleeding wounds ; but poured in no balsam.

Suddenly, “the Lord turned the captivity” of this self same man, and even doubled the prosperity of his best days. And no sooner was *that* known, than his old friends who had forsaken him came back of their own accord, and were ready enough to hook themselves upon him.—*Then*, and not till then—“all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house.” His good cheer restores him to their good *liking*.

Yet, unfeeling as the world is, there are some in it, and I hope not a few, who stick as close, nay closer, in the bleak night of adversity, than in the sunshine of prosperity. These, whether male or female, are of the right stamp.—Reader, hast thou a friend of this sort ; one who had been thy father's or thy mother's friend in distress ; one who has readily befriended thyself in

time of utmost need?—Then hast thou a pearl of inestimable worth—lock it close to thy bosom.

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## NUMBER XLIV.

*Of the importance of learning to say No.*

A very wise and excellent Mother, gave the following advice with her dying breath—“ My son, learn to say, No.”—Not that she did mean to counsel her son to be a churl in speech, or to be stiff-hearted in things indifferent or trivial—and much less did she counsel him to put his negative upon the calls of charity and the impulses of humanity; but her meaning was, that, along with gentleness of manners and benevolence of disposition, he should possess an inflexible firmness of purpose—a quality beyond all price, whether it regards the sons or the daughters of our fallen race.

Persons so infirm of purpose, so wanting in resolution, as to be incapable, in almost any case, of saying No, are among the most hapless of human beings; and that, notwithstanding their sweetness of temper, their courteousness of demeanor, and what ever else of amiable and estimable qualities they possess. Though they see the right, they pursue the wrong; not so much out of inclination, as from a frame of mind disposed to yield to every solicitation.

An historian, of a former and distant age, says of a Frenchmen who ranked as the first Prince of the Blood, that he had a bright and knowing mind, a graceful sprightliness, good intentions, complete disinterestedness, and an incredible easiness of manners, but that, with all these qualities, he acted a most contemptible part for the want of resolution; that he came into

all the factions of his time, because he wanted power to resist those who drew him in for their own interest; but that he never came out of any but with shame, because he wanted resolution to support himself whilst he was in them.

It is owing to the want of resolution, more than to the want of sound sense, that a great many persons have run into imprudences, injurious, and sometimes fatal, to their worldly interests. Numerous instances of this might be named, but I shall content myself with naming only one—and that is, rash and hazardous suretiship. The pit stands uncovered, and yet men of good sense, as well as amiable dispositions, plunge themselves into it, with their eyes wide open. Notwithstanding the solemn warnings in the proverbs of the Wise Man, and notwithstanding the examples of the fate of so many that have gone before them, they make the hazardous leap. And why? Not from inclination, or with a willing mind, but because being solicited, urged and intreated, they know not how to say No. If they had learnt, not only to pronounce that monosyllable, but to make use of it on all proper occasions, it might have saved from ruin, both themselves and their wives and children.

But the worst of it is still behind. The ruin of character, of morals, and of the very heart and soul of man, originates oft in a passive yieldingness of temper and disposition, or in the want of the resolution to say No. Thousands and many thousands, through this weakness, have been the victims of craft and deceit. Thousands and many thousands, once of fair promise, but now sunk in depravity and wretchedness, owe their ruin to the act of consenting, against their better judgments, to the enticements of evil companions and familiars. Had they said No, when duty, when honour, when conscience, when every thing sacred demanded

it of them—happy might they now have been—the solace of their kindred and the ornaments of society.

Sweetness of temper, charitableness of heart, gentleness of demeanor, together with a strong disposition to act obligingly, and even to be yielding in things indifferent or of trifling moment—are amiable and estimable traits of the human character: but there must be withal, and as the ground-work of the whole, such a firmness of resolution as will guarantee it against yielding, either *imprudently*, or *immorally*, to solicitations and enticements. Else one has very little chance in passing down the current of life, of escaping the eddies and quicksands that lie in his way.

I will add here only one remark, which is, that stiff tempers in children, are of better omen than generally they are thought to be. Such tempers, properly managed and rightly directed, are the most likely to form characters of fixed and immovable resolution;—characters the least liable to be bent, by circumstances, by threats, or by persuasions, from the line of prudence and duty.

It is related, in the life of the illustrious Reformer Martin Luther, that, according to his own account, he had, on a certain occasion, been thoroughly chastized, by his preceptor, with the rod, fifteen times in succession. Had his natural temper been mild, and flexible, like that of his amiable and truly excellent coadjutor, Melancthon, it would have unfitted him for being the prime-leader in achieving that most difficult and stupendous work—the Reformation.

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## NUMBER XLV.

*Of the calamities of hereditary idleness.*

WE cannot, if we will, make ourselves torpid like an oyster. We must needs be doing something with our existence, or endure else a wearisome load, as undescribable as it is intolerable. Indeed occupation of one kind or other is so necessary to human quiet, that life itself is burdensome without it. For short as life is, there are but few, if any, who never complain, at heart, of the superfluity of their time. Whereas the wights, great and small, who have nothing at all to do, are, for the most part, perpetually uttering this most dolorous kind of complaint, or at least manifest no ordinary degree of restlessness—being burdened with their time much more than the most busy are burdened with their business.

The misery of idleness is to be seen nearly as much in high-life, as in the rags and filth of extreme poverty. In Europe there are classes of people who are idle as it were out of necessity: not that they are unable to find employ, but they are unable to find such employ as they think comports with their dignity. Manual labour of any kind would degrade them; nor does the condition of their rank allow them to enter into trade, or even to embrace any of the learned professions. In fact, save those few who are selected to take part in the administration of government, or who are placed in high military stations; they are condemned, by the exalted condition of their birth, to perpetual idleness. And what is the result? It is, that this very exaltation of birth, which places them so far above all ordinary business, makes them doubly wretched.

“ There is scarcely any truth more certain or more evident,” says a writer who was possessed of a personal knowledge of the splendid group whose picture he has delineated,—“ than that the noblesse of Europe, are, in general, less happy than the common people. There is one irrefragable proof of it, which is, that they do not maintain their own population. Families, like stars, or candles, which you will, are going out continually ; and without fresh recruits from the plebeians, the nobility would, in time be extinct. If you make allowances for the state, which they are condemned by themselves to support, they are poorer than the poor—deeply in debt—and tributary to usurious capitalists, as greedy as the Jews.”\*

Persons in the intermediate grades between the *very* top and the *very* bottom of the scale of life, have precious advantages over those who are placed in either extreme. That they have advantages over the lowest, all will readily admit ; and that they have some important advantages over the highest, is a position equally true. In point of real, solid comfort and happiness, the condition of the farmer or mechanic who supplies his daily wants by the labour of his own hands, is infinitely preferable to that of the noblesse above described ; who, for want of regular occupation, are under the hard necessity of taking a deal of pains and of resorting to numberless expedients and devices, to wear out the tedious moments of their earthly existence. Even whilst, with utmost eagerness, they are seemingly pursuing pleasure, their chief efforts are to escape from misery, by killing the time which hangs so heavily upon their minds and hearts. For, as to pleasure, they are so surfeited of it, that they seek it only as

\* Discourses on Davila, by the ex-president Mr. Adams.

preferable to the distressing tediousness of total inaction.

Although, fortunately, in these United States, there are no hereditary ranks, that fix as it were by never-ending entailment, the baneful disease of sloth, upon particular families ; yet excessive wealth operates, not unfrequently, the like effects. “ After a gatherer comes a scatterer”—is a proverbial saying, which, in whatever country it originated, is no where, perhaps, more strikingly matter-of-fact, than in our own. Indeed nothing can be more natural than the process. The “gatherer,” if he have gathered a very large heap, is of course a man of great worldly prudence ; but so far from being able to bequeath that quality to his children, the single circumstance of their being set up in the world with fortunes, has an almost irresistible tendency to render them imprudent and improvident. You cannot put the old head upon the young shoulders. You can hardly convince the rich-born youth, that considerable care and attention will be necessary on his part, merely to keep the fortune that falls to him. There is more than an even chance that he will be either carelessly indolent, or prodigally dissipated ; that he will either waste his time in idleness, or spend it in vain, if not vicious, pursuits.

The vanity of wealth, will alike affect *his* children and his childrens' children. They will dote much upon the circumstance of their springing from an opulent stock, and, by natural consequence, will feel themselves quite above the ordinary occupations of life. Meanwhile the family estate will have been divided and subdivided, till the share of each comes to be very small. A sort of stateliness, is, however, kept up in their narrow circumstances and even in their poverty. They preserve, with a sort of religious re-

erence, old pictures, little fragments of plate, or some precious memorial or other, of what *once was*. For the pride of family founded altogether upon wealth, seldom suffers much abatement by the ruin of that foundation. Thus it is that the needy descendants of a very rich family are in a worse condition by far, than most others of the sons and daughters of want ; since the indolence of their habits and the magnificence of their notions, alike disable them for procuring a comfortable livelihood, and for enjoying the little they possess.

There is one kind of revolution that is perpetually progressing in this country ;—the revolution in fortunes. The rich families of the last age, all but a very few, are utterly extinct as to fortune : and, on the other hand, the families, in general, that now figure away in the magnificence of wealth, are the founders of their own fortunes ; not a few of them having emerged from obscurity, and some from the deepest shades of poverty. The revolutionary wheel is still turning, and, with a few turns more, it will turn down a great part of the present rich families, and will turn up, in their stead, an equal, or perhaps greater, number, from the poor and the middling classes. This course has, well nigh, as firm a fixture, as have the changes of day and night.

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## NUMBER XLVI.

*Of the lamentable species of helplessness occasioned by  
Pride and false Shame.*

*LEARN your children to help themselves, is a practical maxim deserving more general notice than it ever yet has obtained, or peradventure ever will obtain, in*

this scornful and foolish world. The highest and most important part of the art of teaching is to learn the young mind to think for itself, and to exercise and exert its faculties of judgment and understanding, as well as of memory ; for these faculties, grow and increase only by exercise. The less they are exercised in childhood, the more feeble they come to be in manhood. And besides, one who has been unaccustomed to the exertions of thought in the early years of life, commonly lacks all disposition to accustom himself to it afterwards ; it being a kind of labour which early habit makes pleasant, but which early neglect renders intolerably irksome.

And as children should be led to think for themselves, or to exert those faculties which pertain to the mind only ; so also should they be inured to the exercise of those mixed faculties that call forth the exertion of the mind and body conjointly. This class of exercises is of more easy performance, especially in childhood, than the other. It is altogether natural too ; and it tends to give vigour and alertness alike to the mental and the corporeal frame. If children be made to help themselves as soon and as much as they are able, it wonderfully conduces to the improvement of their faculties, and has at the same time an auspicious influence upon their dispositions. Whereas if they be accustomed to have every thing done for them by others that others can do, the rust of sloth and the canker of pride will be full apt to spoil whatever of excellence nature has bequeathed them.

Childhood and youth, are periods of life which materially influence all its following periods. Whether these early years be passed in torpid indolence, or in well-directed industry, is a point on which greatly depends the worth or the worthlessness of human characters. What man or what woman that has a relish for

intellectual pleasure, but can trace that relish down to the days of childhood ? Where is the man who guides his affairs with discretion, or the woman that “ looketh well to the ways of her household,” and yet was not in some measure imbued with industrious and provident dispositions in early life ? On the other hand, who that had been treated, till the age of twenty, like an helpless infant, and had every want supplied without being put to either mental or bodily exertion, was ever good for any thing afterwards ? I freely admit indeed that there are some honourable exceptions ; but they are like the few exceptions to a well established general rule.

It is the misfortune of high rank and great wealth, that the children of families so distinguished are often treated as helpless till they become so in reality. They must have waiters to do for them a multitude of little things which it would be greatly for their benefit to do for themselves. They must be served with such assiduity as to supersede almost the use of their own limbs. They have feet, but they walk not ; hands have they, but they use them not, except for putting their food and drink to their mouths. And are they happy ? No : it is of the nature of this kind of training up to render them discontented, peevish and querulous, all their lives, even though fortune should never forsake them. And if they chance to fall into poverty, they are wretched indeed,—no less incapable than unwilling to earn a livelihood by industry.

But the sum of the mischief would be not near so great if it were confined altogether to families of high rank or great wealth ; for these are comparatively very few. It is the fevery appetite of aping the stateliness of rank and the pomp of wealth, that occasions the commonness of this perverted education and the huge mass of wretchedness which follows it.

Madam —— is a branch of what had been called a *good* family. The estate is run out, and she is poor and dependant.—She retains, however, some precious relics of former splendour. With these she feeds her vanity, Not unfrequently she boasts, that never in all her life-time did she defile her hands with labour ; and she would swoon at the thought that one of her maiden daughters should descend to the business of a milliner, or that the other should marry a substantial tradesman.

Mrs. —— has no rich ancestry or great connections to boast of, and her worldly circumstances are but indifferent ; but the darling wish of her heart is the elevation of her children. Wherefore, she moils and toils day and night, gives herself no rest, impairs her constitution by overworking, for the goodly purpose of bringing up her daughters in *genteel* idleness, that so perchance they may obtain the notice of the *better* sort.

B—— was, in his better days, a snug farmer of industrious habits, and was pretty well contented with his lot ; though, from the beginning, he had rather an uppish turn, both he and his rib. In an evil hour he happened to be made a militia captain.—That connected him with the colonel of the regiment, and at length, after some wriggling for it, with the brigadier general, and, of course, with sundry other men of consequence ; so that, between his family and theirs, there was a free interchange of visits. The burden of these new expenses was too heavy for him, and he sunk under it. The reverse threw the good couple into an agony of grief and despair for their children : and, upon being reminded that they were considerably grown, and could all earn their living, the captain and his lady made answer, that it was not the fear of want, either for themselves or theirs, that so stung their hearts, but the ag-

prehension lest their children should lose their rank and be degraded to the level of *common* folks. This is no fable, nor fiction.

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## NUMBER XLVII.

*Of the Proper and Improper, as depending upon the diverse circumstances and ages of life.*

THE love of propriety, along with an accurate perception of the difference between the *proper* and the *improper*, is an estimable quality in human beings; for though it is not virtue in its best and highest sense, it is virtue's shield and ornament. To *woman* in particular, it is a pledge of honour and a diadem of beauty.

There are women who, without any extraordinary strength of intellect or advantages of education, discover a sort of intuitive or instinctive perception of propriety, on all occasions and under all circumstances—far surpassing, in that particular, most *men* of even talents and learning. Solomon, with a single stroke of his pencil, has given us the portraiture of such a woman. *She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.* Here are blended two characteristic traits, of which, neither would show well by itself. Discretion unaccompanied with kindness—mere selfish cold-hearted discretion, whether found in man or woman, has very little claim to commendation. She is a woman but in name, that has no heart in her bosom. On the other hand, kindness is very liable to error, and even to fatal error, when it lacks the guidance of discretion. Whereas the union of these two qualities, crowned, withal, with that essen-

tial requisite, *the fear of the Lord*—renders female character alike respectable and lovely. A woman of this description, though destitute of the advantages of beauty, or youth, or wealth, or wit, is an ornament to the human family; while, to her own family, she is one of the first of blessings.

The laws of propriety not only comprise all the laws of morality—for nothing that is immoral can be proper—but they reach to a vast variety of things that, in themselves, are indifferent:—their propriety or impropriety depending on time, place, age, circumstances or cases, without name or number. Far from attempting to explore this boundless field, I shall but mention two articles culled from it.

*First*, what may be quite proper for some persons; may be very improper for others. For instance, it is proper for the rich, if they choose it, to make the appearance of riches, in their buildings, their furniture, the elegances of their tables, the superior quality of their apparel, or in any lawful way else, which their circumstances can well afford. If a rich man make him great works—if he build him costly houses—if he plant him fine gardens furnished with pools of water, “to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees,”—or if he array his household in splendid apparel;—there is no impropriety in all this, provided the clear income of his estate be fully sufficient to defray these expenses, over and above what is due to the calls of charity. It is much better than to let his gold and his silver lie and rust in moth-eaten bags; for, by giving employ, to so many artists and labourers, he encourages and rewards industry, and becomes the prop and support of the industrious poor that are about him.

But—mark the difference—when a man that is not rich, affects the manner of the rich, the impropriety of

his conduct is manifest to all but himself; and he is only laughed at for his pains. Would it were an uncommon instance! So it is not. There are thousands of this sort; thousands that are pawning the first and essential necessities of life, and sinking themselves into debt and pitiless poverty; and all from an itch for mere show. What a mass of wretchedness and misery might be prevented by a timely cure of this single folly! No kind of fascination is more generally prevalent, and there is scarcely any one that draws after it more ruinous consequences.

*Second*, the other of the two points that I proposed to notice, is, that certain things which are proper at one time of life, are improper at another. In a qualified sense, "to every thing there is season." Childhood is the season for childlike things, which, in the succeeding periods of life, must be put away. Youth, also, is the season for certain things which peculiarly belong to that age. It is the spring-time of life; and there is in it a certain undescribable hilarity of look, air and manner, that exactly befits it, but which ill suits the season of old age. A boyish old man, or a girlish old woman, is as unnatural a phenomenon, as the flowers of May in the month of December.

Few things are more difficult than to grow old with a good grace: and perhaps the burden of the difficulty lies, with a disproportioned weight, upon the female part of our species. To the vainer and more superficial sort, it is bitter as death to lose the youthful bloom, for which alone they had been admired, and for which they had so much admired themselves. And hence there are to be found many matrons, affecting, in dress and manner, the frivolity of girlish years—in spite of obtrusive wrinkles and silvery locks.

## NUMBER XLVIII.

*Of keeping children from the company of children.*

HE that formed man, and knew best, what was in him, and what he was made for, *saw that it was not good that he should be alone.* This single line, or sentence, confutes the volumes of glowing declamation in favour of solitude, or total abstraction from the world. To man, the social state is the natural state : it brightens his intellects, expands his heart, strengthens his weakness and multiplies his enjoyments ; whereas habitual solitude tends to narrowness of heart and mustiness of temper. Not that it is good to be always in company. That opposite extreme, which so many have run into, is quite as bad as the other. The solitary being who shuns all company, and the empty flutterer who finds no enjoyment out of company, are alike wide of the true mark ; which is a due mixture of intervals of well-spent solitude, with the business and duties and enjoyments of social life.

As Zoologists tell us, “ It has long been observed that those races of animals which live in societies, and unite their efforts for the attainment of one common end, exhibit a great superiority of intellectual faculties over those which lead a life of solitude and seclusion : and the observation applies equally to the small as to the larger animals ; although among the insect tribes the distinction is most strongly marked.” It has also been noticed by careful observers, that the gregarious races of animals, in many instances, evidently learn of one another, and so become more sagacious, and more expert in their operations, by reason of their living in a social state. Young singing-birds, for example, are

known to improve in voice and skill, by listening to the notes of an old and experienced songster.

In human beings, the social affection seems to be nearly coeval with the first dawn of reason. An infant, not unfrequently has been seen to leap with joy in its mother's arms at the sight of another infant; reaching out its little hands to embrace the stranger. Emulation, also, is of the like early growth. Infants, that have small children constantly about them, if other things be equal, learn to walk and to speak, earlier than those that are confined altogether to the company of full grown people. Equally true is it, that both small and large children enjoy themselves a great deal better for being much in the company of their equals. Moreover, it increases the growth and strength of their minds, improves the faculties of their bodies, and furnishes them with a sort of information highly necessary to their childish years.

How much children learn from children, is beyond account. It is true, in this way, they learn some things, which they must be made to unlearn. But that is not so bad as to deaden their faculties and make mopes of them, by debarring them altogether from the society of those of their own age. There is a mixture of good and evil, as in all other human affairs, so also in any system of education, which human wisdom can devise; that being the most eligible one, in which the good, most clearly preponderates: and, upon this principle, to suffer children to enjoy the company of children, and at the same time to keep a watchful eye upon them, is a much better way than wholly to immure them, as some parents have done, either from pride, or through fear of contamination.

No topics have been worn more thread-bare, than those relating to the comforts and benefits and blessings

of society: topics that have been the standing dish from time immemorial; and have been treated of so often, and in some instances so ably, as almost to preclude the possibility of adding a single thought altogether new. There is one important particular, however, which seems to have been less heeded than the rest; and that is the *salutary restraints* which well-regulated society imposes upon its members: I mean not the restraints of law, but merely those of opinion.

If there be persons who care not at all what any think of them, their minds are either far above, or far below, the natural feelings of humanity. Indeed it is more than doubtful whether any person, of this description exists, unless amongst the vilest and most abandoned of the species. It is human nature, to love esteem and abhor reproach; and, for this reason, if law has so general influence over civilized man, as the law of *Decency*; inasmuch as it governs the external conduct, or the manners, of even those who have little or no regard for moral principle. A sense of shame is one of the most powerful checks upon the atrocious vices which society deems scandalous: so that decency of manners in society is owing not so much to its laws, as to public sentiment, or the authority of opinion.

How happens it that they who emigrate from places in which public sentiment is decidedly in favour of the virtues and the decencies of life, and settle themselves down in a solitary situation, or among neighbours of corrupted sentiments; how happens it, that often they are so changed, so strangely degenerated in their morals and manners? The reason is, that they have lost, or thrown off, what had been the main check upon their behaviour. As they are no longer under the stern, scrutinizing eye of virtuous society, they no longer scruple

to indulge freely the irregular propensities of their minds and hearts.

There are those in private life, who are capable of doing nearly, if not quite as much good, as can be done by legislators and magistrates : they are persons possessed of great or considerable wealth. In *our* country, there is no one thing that confers so much weight of personal influence as riches. The rich, if they possess parts withal, have a matchless influence upon the morals and manners of society. They are looked up to ; they are imitated ; in things pertaining to manners, they take the lead, and have considerably the direction. Happy were it, if their influence were always directed to shame vice and to make virtue fashionable.

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### NUMBER XLIX.

*Of learning children to lie.*

— “ To be branded with the name of liar  
Is ignominy fit for slaves alone.”

SOPHOCLES.

THIS was the sentiment of an ancient Greek poet of great and deserved fame ; a man, who, unenlightened with the rays of christianity, spoke merely from the impulse of nature.

The ancient Persians, as history informs us, were at great pains to learn and habituate their children to speak the truth, and thought this a main point in their education. The old Grecians and Romans considered lying so infamous as to degrade a freeman to a level with their slaves. Even the Turks, are reported to hold a liar in the utmost contempt. And indeed, by a

sort of general consent, in most parts of the world, this vice has been reckoned a mark of cowardly meanness of nature, and been branded with infamy. While the laws and sanctions of christianity, most solemnly forbid lying, and threaten it with all that is awful, the laws even of *-fashion* condemn and reproach it as the offspring of a pitiful, dastardly spirit. So that a notorious liar, is excluded, as by general suffrage, not only from the communion of the pious, but also from the society of the polite.

It is not to my purpose however, to treat here of the vice itself, or of its direful consequences ; but rather to suggest ways and means to prevent its growing into a habit with young children. For, of these two things I am confident : *first*, that few, if any, have become notorious for lying, who did not begin to learn it while young ; and *second*, that few children, if any, are deeply initiated in this black art, unless through the fault, directly or indirectly, of those who have had the immediate care of their persons and their education. Truth is as easily spoken as falsehood ; and the habit of speaking the truth, when once fixed, is perhaps nearly as hard to be broken off, as the habit of lying. They both grow into habits by degrees, and most commonly according to the management and moulding of early childhood.

Tell me not that there is in some children, even in some little children, such a strong propensity to lying that the habit is not preventable by any human means. How many thousand *pagans* (the old Persians, for instance) had taken such pains with their children in this particular, that, among them all, a single liar was scarcely known. And it is hard to tell why *christian* parents and instructors might not be equally success-

ful, if they would only use the same prudence and unweariable diligence.

It is said that the children of the oppressed poor in jolly and generous-hearted Ireland, are remarkably quick and intelligent, but almost universally addicted to lying, which they are taught by even their own mothers. The boy is sent off by his mother, to pilfer and bring home, fuel from the landlord's turf-rick. If the little urchin succeeds, and returns well-laden with plunder, he is applauded. If he happens to meet with the landlord, or any of his domestics, and is asked whither he is going ; provided he brings himself off by lying, he is praised for his art and cunning. But should it bechance him to speak the truth in reply to the interrogation, he is sure of a whipping upon his return home ; or, at best, of a sharp reprimand from his mother, in terms like the following :—

“ Ah, ye little brat ! And what made ye tell the gentleman when he met ye, ye rogue, that ye were going to the rick ? And what business had ye to go and belie me to his honor, ye unnatural piece of goods ! I'll teach ye to make mischief through the country ! So I will. Have ye got no better sense and manners at this time o' day, than to behave, when one trusts ye abroad, so like an innocent ? ”\*

I would fain believe, that, in this free and goodly country of ours, there are not very many mothers, nor fathers, disposed to learn their children to lie, wittingly, directly, and even by their positive injunctions : yet I do fear there are very many who do it either unwittingly, or indirectly, or consequentially.

Some do it unwittingly, or without consideration. The child (be it supposed) begins to lie ere it can fair-

\* Edgeworth's practical Education.—Miss Edgeworth remarks, that, in Ireland, an *innocent* is synonymous with a *fool*,

ly be regarded as a moral agent. In such a case,—and such cases are not uncommon,—it is diverting, particularly to parents, to hear the cunning little thing fib.—“ And where is the harm ? ”—So say, or so think, some inconsiderate ones. But they wofully err.—The harm lies here. The *fibbing* child, though only three or four years old, is now beginning to be fashioned to the awful habit of lying : and though easy to be cured at this age, the cure might, a few years hence, be very difficult, if not impossible.

Others again, indirectly learn their little children to lie, by passing deceptions upon them.—Now every deception that is passed upon the child, goes to learn the child to deceive. The deceptive arts that are played off upon himself, he is quickly prepared to put in practice upon others. Especially if his parents, to whom he looks for examples,—if they deceive him with falsehoods, whether to induce him to take medicine, or for whatever purpose else, *he*, also, will not scruple to utter falsehoods to gain his ends.

Finally, some, so keenly mark, and so severely punish, even the petty faults of children, that they are strongly tempted to a denial of the truth, whenever they see the least chance of escape by that means ;—and thus they begin to get the habit of lying, as it were in their own defence.

To learn children to despise and detest falsehood and prevarication, and on no account to be guilty of an untruth, is one of the most essential articles in a good education. This is among the good seed that should be sown, betimes, in their minds, by their parents and instructors ; so as to prevent, if possible, their ever uttering a wilful falsehood, or at least, to cure the evil at its first budding : else the force of habit being superad-

ded to vicious propensities of nature, a cure will be doubly difficult, and next to hopeless.

Great care should be taken, not only that children be not *led* into temptation to this pernicious evil, but, also, that they be early and constantly guarded against it by all prudent means, and be made to get the habit of honestly speaking the truth on every occasion. Be not overmuch prying and severe, in regard to the mere frailties common to childhood. Many things you must overlook, or not seem to observe, unless you would render your government over your children both odious and contemptible by your perpetual chiding. Never deceive your children in word or deed. Never fail to reprove them seriously for any, and every, act of falsehood, or equivocation, that you find them guilty of; however much your vanity may be flattered with the cunning and dexterity of the little deceivers. Whenever they frankly own a fault, whilst you blame them for the fault, forget not to commend them for speaking the truth about it.

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#### NUMBER L.

*Of habitual discontent, arising from imaginary wants,  
rather than real ones.*

THE following short apologue of *Sadi*, an Asiatic sage, is full of valuable instruction:—"I never complained of my wretched forlorn condition, but on one occasion, when my feet were naked, and I had not wherewithal to shoe them. Soon after, meeting a man without feet, I was thankful for the bounty of Providence to myself, and with perfect resignation submitted to my want of shoes."

The true secret of living happily lies in the philosophy of contentment, which is of more value than the imagined stone of the alchymist, which turns every thing to gold.

It is to be lamented, however, that, in this age of boasted light and improvement, the philosophy of contentment is very little studied or regarded. From various corrupted sources we have learned, not to be content, but dissatisfied, with the ordinary conditions of life. And though neither *shoeless*, nor destitute of any essential article of raiment or food, we are ready to consume our hearts with vexation because we are not seated at the upper end of fortune's table. The semblance of happiness is more sought after than the reality ; the mere phantom of it, rather than the substance. The simple plainness of former days is despised. Plain apparel, plain fare, and plain houses and furniture, such as our worthy progenitors were quite contented with and very thankful for, our fastidious delicacy regards with scorn, and we must needs be fine, and fashionable, else pine our lives away in grief and shame.

Nor would it be either so alarming, or so lamentable, were this the folly of only a few. But the worst of it is, it has spread, like an epidemic, over the whole land, and throughout almost every class of society. Tens, and even hundreds of thousands, embracing both sexes alike, are the miserable victims of a morbid sensibility, and squeamishly dash from their lips the cup of ordinary comfort which they are presented with, because it is not filled to the brim, or because it is not spiced and sweetened exactly to their taste.

And where lies the remedy ? It is not within the art of the apothecary, nor in the power of any nostrums of partial and limited effect. No, the people must be wise for themselves. The great body of the people,

coming once more to their sober senses, must agree to return to the plain, frugal, uncostly habits of other times; and must strive, with general accord, to bring those long-discarded habits into fashion again, and to render them honourable by the suffrage of public opinion.

As the want of contentment is one of the most grievous wants that affect human life, it ought to be provided against with the utmost care, and particularly in the following ways.

1. In training up children, scarcely any thing is of greater importance than guarding them against the intrusion of too many artificial wants. I say *too many*, because *some* wants of this sort do naturally and necessarily grow out of civilization, and it is their excess only that tends to discontent and wretchedness. Of that excess the danger is great, inasmuch as the effects are always deplorable. What multitudes, at this very instant, are discontented and wretched, who might enjoy life comfortably had they been early taught to conform their desires to their conditions, and to act upon the principles of sober and rational economy. Nor is it of small importance in training up children, to accustom them to useful employ. A useless life is seldom found to be a contented one. Occupation is so necessary to human quiet, that to bring up children in idleness is the way to make them a burden to themselves as well as community.

From this twofold cause, the excess of artificial wants and the neglect of forming habits of useful industry in the early period of life, there has sprung perhaps a full half of the discontent that secretly preys upon so many bosoms. In short, important as it is to teach children reading and writing and the use of figures, it is of still greater importance to regulate their tempers, to curb

their wayward desires, and to fix them in habits of industry, temperance and frugality ; without which, the acquisition of learning could be but of little benefit to them.

2. The self-discipline of adult age, is an essential requisite toward leading and enjoying a contented life. A well disciplined mind studies to be content, and most commonly is so. It attains its desires by moderating and limiting them, and thus bringing them within the compass of its means. It accustoms itself to view, without envy, the wealth and grandeur which fall not to its lot, and which seldom render their possessors the more happy ; and to be satisfied with, and thankful for, the mere necessary and common accommodations of the journey of life. In short, it depends much less upon our circumstances, whether we shall be happy or miserable in life, than on our tempers, and our view of things. Many enjoy themselves well in narrow circumstances, because they bring their minds to their situations. But when to narrow circumstances are added large desires and magnificent notions, it is *then*, and then *only* is it, that unhappiness results from the want of a fortune.

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## NUMBER LI.

*Of several of the predisposing causes of unhappy marriages.*

It is a common saying in the world, that there are but few happy marriages ; and doubly deplorable would be the condition of mankind, were it *wholly* true. It is true, however, only in a qualified or limited sense,

What ! is marriage, in itself considered, a source of wretchedness rather than of weal ? Do they that marry, change their condition *generally* for the worse ? Are the married, for the most part, less happy than the unmarried ? So it is not ; nor will any assert it but the profane and licentious, or the inconsiderate. Yet, after all, but few marriages are exceeding happy. And why ? It is not for lack of excellence in the institution, nor because the connubial state is not in itself conducive to human comfort and weal. Elsewhere lie the reasons ; of which some will be included in the following particulars.

1. It often happens that too much is expected beforehand. In none of the conditions or relations of this life, is unalloyed happiness the lot of man ; and, by consequence, those who indulge the unreasonable expectation of finding it in the connubial state must inevitably drink of the bitter cup of disappointment.

2. Since the fall, the intercourse of connubial life is never (such as it primitively was) between persons of perfect innocence and virtue ; but it is, in all cases, betwixt those who are frail, infirm of mind, and more or less defective in heart. Now it is for want of duly considering this matter before their marriage, that a great many couples are unreasonably vexed at the infirmities, failings, and petty faults, which they perceive in each other afterwards ; charging upon wedlock the disappointment that originated in the illusions of their own fancies.

3. As in other contracts, so in that of marriage, the parties too often deal unfairly with one another, by artfully concealing their personal defects, and affecting qualities of which they are devoid.

That ornament of human nature, as well as of the society of Friends to which he belonged, namely, Dr.

Fothergill, of London—a man alike distinguished for parts and learning, and for benevolence and piety—being informed that a gentleman at a house where he visited was paying his addresses to a young lady, desired leave to offer to him a piece of advice. Upon the gentleman making a bow of submission—“Friend,” said the shrewd physician “my advice is this—that thou shouldest court in thy *every day clothes*.”

“The Doctor,” as observes his commentator, “unquestionably did not mean that the sentiment he delivered should be confined to the article of dress. He intended to insinuate that the man who is paying his addresses (and, by parity of reason, the lady also who is receiving them) should exhibit themselves to each other such as they usually are, and should not endeavour to wear, for the time, a more favourable character than will be found ordinarily to belong to them.”

What a deal of matrimonial disappointment and strife might be prevented, if, while the treaty were going on, both the addressers and the addressed would appear in their *every day clothes*?—or in no better character for temper and disposition, or for any attractive or estimable quality, than such as they were determined to maintain, in the connubial state, constantly, throughout the whole of their lives.

4. The little obliging attentions which are the food of friendship, and without which close and ardent friendship can hardly be kept alive for any long while, are too often remitted after marriage, and even discontinued. And hence, without any flagrant fault on either side, coolness arises, then indifference, and finally alienation.

5. Among the higher classes, marriage, in too many instances, is the cold, calculating chaffery of avarice and ambition, for money or for rank. And as neither

love nor friendship has any concern in the contract, it is no wonder that neither love nor friendship should ever after spring up and bless the union.

6. Amongst the lower classes many rush into marriage improvidently, or without being furnished with any competent means of supporting a family. Poverty and want follow of course. Their own suffering is aggravated by the sufferings of their little ones; and they look back, with deep regrets, to the comparative comforts of their single life.

Lastly, there are those of the baser sort, who, by reason of the perverseness of their tempers, or the pravity of their hearts and viciousness of their lives, would needs be wretched in any condition. As husbands and wives, they mutually are fiendlike tormentors, if equally matched; or if yoked together unequally, the connection proves the sorest of calamities to the better party.

And yet, after making all these deductions, it is unquestionably true that more than a full *moiety* of the social comfort enjoyed in this world, is the fruit of marriage. In it the extreme cases, either way, are comparatively few. Of married men and women the most by far are made neither *very* happy nor *very* wretched by this connection. Between these two extremes there is an intermediate class, immense in numbers, who, though they constantly experience a mixture of good and evil in the connubial state, will perceive, nevertheless, upon a fair estimate, that the good considerably preponderates.

One observation more, and I shall conclude. The surest basis of connubial happiness is genuine piety. "Wisdom," as observes a venerable sage in the Apocraphy, "is a loving spirit." The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated. The humility, the meekness, the benevolence, the gen-

tleness, of real christianity, and indeed the whole body of the christian virtues, when heart-felt, and acted out in sincerity, do directly and powerfully tend to sweeten the trials and multiply the comforts of those who are partners together in marriage : while the hope of meeting in a better world, “ strews their path to the grave with flowers.”

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## NUMBER LII.

*Of favoritism as respects the deal of parents with their own children.*

As parents naturally love their children, so they naturally wish to be loved by them ; and yet, very often, this darling wish of their hearts is defeated by their own imprudence. Upon this point it would be easy to enumerate facts or instances ; but I shall mention only one—and that is, the partial favour and disfavour of parents toward their offspring.

Parental favouritism springs, sometimes, from motives that are seemingly reasonable, as some children are possessed of dispositions much more attractive than those of others. But even where this difference is clearly seen, it concerns the parents to take heed that the bias of their hearts become not too visible in their conduct. It is no wonder that the venerable patriarch felt a superior degree of affection for the son, who, in regard to every thing morally excellent and lovely, was so manifestly exalted above his brethren : nevertheless, the manifestation of the partiality so reasonable in itself—*the coat of many colours*, for instance—led to consequences of the most tragical nature.

Happy would it be, however, if there were no parent

tal bias but such as is founded on merit, as in the instance just mentioned: whereas it sometimes springs from causes that can afford it not the least shadow of excuse.—Of these I will name only two.

1. Personal Beauty, and especially female beauty, is frequently the ground of parental partiality. Notwithstanding that the mere possession of beauty neither implies merit nor gives promise of any real excellence, yet often it happens that the most beautiful of the daughters, is, for that single reason, the most caressed by the ill-judging parents, who, on the same wretched principle, are the most negligent of the one that has the least personal comeliness. The unfeeling cruelty of this species of domestic favouritism is too obvious to need remark: its results are unhappy every way. Even the favourite herself is a great loser, for, in proportion as her vanity is fostered, and by *such* hands, every estimable quality that might grow up in her mind under proper culture, is stifled. On the other hand, the smothered discontents and heart-burnings of the children who lie under unmerited neglect, and their feelings of envy toward the favourite, are the seeds which often burst up finally into violent and interminable contentions.

The parental discretion acts a part quite different from that which has now been described. It warns and admonishes her to whom nature has been lavish in personal attractions, and teaches her betimes, not to value herself upon them: while it encourages those of the family that possess the least of personal comeliness, by imprinting it upon them, that the due cultivation of their intellectual and moral faculties will make them be respectable and respected.

2. There is another species of favouritism practised by parents, which, if not so common, is yet more reprehensible: it is treating the prosperous child with

fond attention, and the unprosperous one with cold neglect. Worldly prosperity is no evidence of merit, nor adversity of demerit. It often happens that, of the members of the same family, having in their outset in life the like prospects—it often happens that some come to wealth, whilst others are cast into the shades of poverty, through misfortune, rather than from any faultiness in their own conduct. In cases of this sort, the partiality of parents, if it be allowable at all, should lean to the unfortunate child : at least they are bound, by the ties of nature and of duty, to show quite as much attention to the unfortunate, as to the fortunate part of their offspring. And it would be a libel upon parents to say, that, in general, the tide of their affection flows or ebbs according as their children make out well or ill in the world. The thing is not common, nor yet is it very rare. There are but few persons of considerable age and observation, who have not witnessed it in more than one instance. And whenever and wherever this happens, it excites emotions of disgust and abhorrence. When the unfortunate son is treated with coldness, because he has been unfortunate, and is poor ; when the unfortunate daughter, along with her needy little ones, is neglected and in a manner forsaken—not by the world only, but by father and mother—when persons bearing the sacred name of parents, are kind only to those of their children who need not their kindness, and forsake those who need it most : when such a horrible thing is seen in the land, it is seen to be detested.

## NUMBER LIII.

*Of one, of the many, remarkable instances, of divine Providence, rewarding filial piety.*

THE mind's eye dwells with less complacency on the severe, than upon the milder virtues, of human nature. The *just* man, one of stern integrity but of a cold heart, does not gain upon our affections like the *good* man, whose warm benevolence is seen in deeds of charity and in the whole round of social and relative duties. The incorruptible integrity and stern inflexibility of Cato, we *admire*, whilst we actually *love* the mild virtues of gratitude and compassion, and an unaffected benignity of disposition.

One of the features of human character, which peculiarly delight and charm every heart of common sensibility, is the pious affection of children to their parents ; nor is it too much to say, that the divine promise of worldly good to those who honour their father and their mother, relates, in part, to the good will of mankind, with which filial piety is almost always rewarded in greater or less degrees. As scarce any thing is regarded with more general abhorrence and detestation than cruelty of children to their parents, or is more frequently punished even in this world by some remarkable retaliation of Providence ; so, on the other hand, filial attentions conciliate favour and multiply friends. A daughter, who, with affectionate assiduity nurses and consoles her father or her mother, in the decrepitude of old age, in sickness and in sorrow ;—a son, who bestows a liberal share of his labour, or his income, to the support of his needy parents, and does what in him lies to make them comfortable :—children who thus

discharge the debt of kindness and tenderness, rarely fail to find friends in time of need.

These remarks are made as an introduction to the following story, which, though it has a romantic appearance, may be credited as matter of fact.

In the former part of the last century, there lived in a large seaport in France, a merchant, who had carried on trade with equal honour and prosperity, till he was turned of fifty ; and then, by sudden and unavoidable losses, found himself unable to comply with his engagements ; and his wife and children, in whom he placed his principal earthly happiness, reduced to such a situation as doubled his distress.

“ His sole resource in that situation was the reflection, that, upon the strictest review of his own conduct, nothing either of iniquity or imprudence appeared. He thought it best therefore to repair to Paris, in order to lay a true state of his affairs before his creditors, that, being convinced of his honesty, they might be induced to pity his misfortunes, and allow him a reasonable space of time to settle his affairs. He was kindly received by some, and very civilly by all ; from whence he received great hopes, which he communicated to his family. But these were speedily dashed by the cruelty of his principal creditor, who caused him to be seized and sent to a gaol.

“ As soon as this melancholy event was known in the country, his eldest son, who was turned of nineteen, listening only to the dictates of filial piety, came post to Paris, and threw himself at the feet of the obdurate creditor, to whom he painted the distress of the family in the most pathetic terms, but without effect. At length, in the greatest agony of mind, he said, Sir, since you think nothing can compensate for your loss, but a victim, let your resentment devolve upon me.

Let me suffer instead of my father, and the miseries of prison will seem light in procuring the liberty of a parent, to console the sorrows of the distracted and dejected, family that I have left behind me. Thus, sir, you will satisfy your vengeance, without sealing their irretrievable ruin.'—And there his tears and sighs stopped his utterance.

" His father's creditor beheld him upon his knees, in this condition, for a full quarter of an hour. He then sternly bid him rise and sit down, which he obeyed. The gentleman then walked from one side of the room to the other, in great agitation of mind, for about the same space of time. At length throwing his arms about the young man's neck, " I find, said he, there is yet something more valuable than money : I have an only daughter, for whose fate I have the utmost anxiety. I am resolved to fix it ; in marrying you she must be happy. Go, carry your father's discharge, ask his consent, bring him instantly hither, and let us bury in the joy of this alliance, all remembrance of what has formerly happened."

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#### NUMBER LIV.

##### *Of the inestimable benefits of Law.*

Of all human institutions, that of *Law* is of primary importance. The benefit of government consists not so much in its being a guard against external, as against internal violence. For it is not certain that a people living without government would be invaded from abroad ; but it is quite certain they would invade, pillage, and murder one another, at home. In every age,

and in every country, man unfettered by law, has been a tiger to man. Not but that, at all times and in all countries, there have been some persons inclined of their own free will to do aright ; but their number and strength have never been sufficient to stem the torrent of violence, without aids from the arm of civil government. So far from it, where anarchy has prevailed, the more virtuous have ever been its marked victims.

If we trace back the streams of time as far towards the source as there are any lights furnished us from history, we shall find that no tyranny has been so horrible as that of anarchy. In the antediluvian ages, in which no regular government of general extent was perhaps known, “ the earth was filled with violence.” Those *giants*, those *men of renown*, so termed by the sacred penman, were, there is reason to think, daring and mighty robbers, who, at the head of their companies of bandits, traversed the countries ; committing pillage, murders and rapes, wherever they went.

In the patriarchal ages there were men of exalted piety, who ruled well their own children and domestics. But even then, well-regulated civil government, was scarcely known any where : else the most venerable patriarch could hardly have been so distressed with fear for the honour of his aged wife, and lest he should himself be murdered on her account, when they were journeying together to Egypt, which at that time was the most renowned for arts and sciences of any country in the world.

There were periods of the like anarchy and its horrible concomitants, in the history of the tribes of Israel : when “ every man did that which was right in his own eyes ;” when “ the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways”\*—for fear of

\* 5th chap. of the book of Judges.

the swarms of robbers and murderers that infested the country.

In the *Heroic Ages* of ancient Greece, there was very little of government or law; mere brutal strength, united with ferocious courage, being the only passport to eminence. The Theseuses and the Herculeses, were renowned and deified for their valorous exploits against robbers. Not that they themselves were scrupulous of committing robbery and murder, every now and then; but they were renowned and deified, because they had been the means of extirpating a race of banditti more execrable than themselves.

The age of chivalry, in modern Europe, bore a considerable resemblance to the heroic ages of Greece. Chivalry, or knight-errantry, had its origin in the deplorable condition of anarchy in which the countries of Europe were placed. The knights-errant, or roving knights, were professedly the protectors of the weaker part of community, and particularly of the fair sex; whose champions they pretended to be, and whose ravishers they very often were. The licentiousness of manners, during the anarchial age of chivalry, was, if we may credit the fragments of its history, both general and shockingly enormous.

Even so far forward as the ninth century, there was no public maritime law in Europe; and in consequence of this lawless condition of the seas, piracy was not only tolerated, but held in honour. The petty sovereigns of the nations upon the Baltic, provided each of their sons with a ship or ships, and enjoined it upon them to make their fortunes by piracy and plunder.

There is an instance comparatively recent, and yet bearing an affinity to those that have been adduced above. Scotland, it is well known, is at present, and long has been, one of the best-moralled countries in the

world: yet only three centuries since, for want of stable government, it was a land of robbers and ruffians.

Camden, in his *Brittania*, speaking of the robberies committed by the Scotch Borderers, in the 16th century, says: “ They sally out of their own borders in the night, in troops, through unfrequented by-ways, and many intricate windings.—All the day-time, they refresh themselves and their horses in lurking-holes they had pitched upon before, till they arrive, in the dark, at those places they have a design upon. As soon as they have seized upon the booty, they, in like manner, return home in the night, through blind ways, and fetching many a compass. The more skilful any captain is to pass through those wild deserts, crooked turnings, and deep precipices, in the thickest mists and darkness, his reputation is the greater, and he is looked upon as a man of an excellent head. And they are so very cunning, that, they seldom have their booty taken from them, unless sometimes, when, by the help of blood-hounds, following them exactly upon their tracks, they may chance to fall into the hands of their adversaries. When being taken, they have so much persuasive eloquence, and so many smooth and insinuating words at command, that if they do not move their judges, nay, even their adversaries (notwithstanding the severity of their natures) to have mercy, yet they incite them to admiration and compassion.”

Two important particulars clearly follow from these historic sketches. The one is, that since we live in an age of regulated government and superior civilization, in which life, character and property, are well secured by law, we cannot too highly prize those blessings: and the other, it behooves that all persons possessing any regard for religion, or morals, or even for their own personal interests, should use their best endeavours to

preserve social order, and to set their faces steadfastly against all wanton violations of good and wholesome laws. Neither is it an unimportant part of *christian* education, to learn and habituate children to prize and venerate the wholesome institutions of government and law.

The Prussian Frederick the Great is said to have remarked, that the laws of a whole realm might be comprised in a pocket volume. And even so it might be in an absolute despotism, but in a free, and a rich, commercial country, the laws must needs be voluminous, and the professors of law numerous. This body of men, whatever be their aberrations in any other respects, have ever been found the strenuous advocates and powerful defenders of civil liberty. The reason is obvious, and a cogent one : it is in a free country only, that the lawyers can obtain wealth and consequence ; for where the judges are the creatures of a despot, it is not the pleading of the advocate that avails, but the bribe of the client.

Before I come to the end of my tether, it is proper to mention the absolute necessity of an impartial and vigilant administration of the laws, without which they are useless, and, sometimes, worse than useless. And here, instead of argument, I will merely transcribe a wholesome anecdote from Malcom's history of Persia.

From the year 1757 until the period of his death in 1778, Carim Khan reigned, with great reputation, over the whole of Persia with the exception of two provinces. Carim one day was on the point of retiring from his judgment seat, harrassed and fatigued with a long attendance, when a man rushed forward in apparent distraction, calling out in a loud voice for justice.— “ Who are you ? ” said Carim. “ I am a merchant, ” replied the man, “ and have been robbed and plunder-

ed, by thieves, of all I possess."—"What were you about," said the Prince, "when you were robbed?"—"I was asleep," answered the man.—"And why did you sleep?" exclaimed Carim, in a peevish and impatient tone.—"Because," said the undaunted Persian, "I made a mistake, and thought you were awake."

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## NUMBER LV.

*Of a disputatious temper and habit.*

It is a saying often quoted as Dr. Franklin's, that "by the collision of different sentiments, sparks of truth are struck out, and light is obtained." But it seems to have been current, though in another manner of phrase, before it came from the pen of the justly celebrated Doctor. In an Almanack dated one hundred and fourteen years back, I have met with the following homely, but pithy verse :

"But quill to quill, like flints on steele do smite,  
Which kindle sparks, and those sparks give us light."\*

On the other hand, a writer possessed of masterly powers of reasoning, who flourished in the beginning of the last century, appears to have thought that, disputing, whether by means of the *quill*, or otherwise, is apt to produce a great deal less of light, than of heat and smoke.

Mr. Locke, in his *Treatise of Education*, observes, "If the use and end of right reasoning be to have right notions and a right judgment of things; to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and to

\* Daniel Leed's Almanack, published in New-York, 1704.

act accordingly, be careful not to let your son be bred up in the art and formality of disputing."—And, as a reason for that conclusion, he goes on to describe the wretched manner in which disputes were generally managed :—" Whether pertinent or impertinent, sense or nonsense, agreeing with or contrary to, what he had said before it matters not : for this, in short, is the way and perfection of logical disputes, that the opponent never takes any answer, nor the respondent ever yields to any argument. This, neither of them must do, whatever becomes of truth or knowledge, unless he would pass for a poor baffled wretch, and lie under the disgrace of not being able to maintain whatever he has once affirmed, which is the great aim and glory of disputing."

Here we find a " collision of different sentiments" on the very question whether disputing tends to advance correct knowledge or to retard it.

Now, to do justice to both sides, it must, I think, be granted that each is in the right, provided allowance be made for the opposite views in which the subject presents itself. Were disputing conducted as it ought, with sincere and paramount love of truth, and a benignity of temper, there might spring from it much good, without any considerable mixture of evil. But conducted, as most commonly it has been, with acrimonious feeling, and the fierceness and obstinacy of pugilists, rather than with the honest candor that is willing in all cases to yield to evidence ; it too often serves but to exasperate and mislead : so that nothing is less desirable in youth, or less to be encouraged, than a disputatious or cavilling temper.

In certain memoirs of the life of Frederick the Great, it is related, that aspiring after the fame of a philosophical reasoner, he was much inclined to exercise his tal-

ents now and then in disputing with the learned men of his court. Accordingly he used, at his leisure, to send for the philosophers whom he kept in waiting, to reason with them ; professing, the meanwhile, that he laid by the monarch and put himself on equal footing, and encouraging them to be free and do their best. But if any one of them happened to invalidate his own arguments, or to get the better of him in any way, he instantly flew into a violent passion, and bestowed upon the offender the most scurrilous epithets. The memoirs further relate, that at one of his literary entertainments, when, in order to promote free conversation, he reminded the circle that there was *no monarch present*, the conversation chanced to turn upon the faults of different governments and rulers. General censures were passing from mouth to mouth with a kind of freedom which such hints were calculated, and apparently intended, to inspire. But Frederick presently put a stop to the topic, by exclaiming, “ Hold your peace, gentlemen, be upon your guard, *else the king will be among you.*”

This instance, while it speaks the imperious, insolent, despot, is characteristical of our general nature. Of disputants, in all ages of the world, there have been but few that were scrupulous of using all the means in their power, to baffle, bear down, and silence, their opponents ; but few, whose unfairness of manner and bitterness of temper have not furnished clear proof that they were more actuated by the proud desire of victory than by a sincere regard to truth ; very few, who have shown themselves willing, in all cases, to give truth fair play. Contrariwise, men, that are naturally, or by custom, of a disputatious temper, seldom are so, for truth’s sake. Generally, something else than the love of truth, has the strongest hold of their hearts.

Perilous, in this respect, is the moral condition of that class of men, whose professional business of disputing, and whose fame and renown, depend upon success in gaining their causes, just or unjust.

*“An indiscriminate defence of right and wrong, contracts the understanding, while it corrupts the heart.”* This short sentence of the celebrated Junius, is deserving of the serious attention of young men of ingenuous dispositions, who have recently entered, or are about entering, upon the profession of the law. One, accustomed to argue indiscriminately for and against truth and right, and whose main road to distinction lies in his talent “to make the worse appear the better reason,” needs, of all men, to keep a careful watch over his moral frame.

Theological disputes, are of a nature that would seem to secure them from the aberrations incidental to those of worldly men. The theologian stands upon hallowed ground. Truth, *Divine Truth*, is his pole-star. The inspired volume is his directory; of which he must not wittingly misconstrue any part for the sake of gaining his argument, nor even though he might gain by it the whole world. His case is similar to that of the Persian judges, who were made to interpret the laws of the realm with ropes about their necks, as indicative of the punishment that awaited them if found guilty of any wilful misinterpretation. And besides, as truth must be his sole aim, so his manner of defending it must be consonant to the spirit of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart”—who, “when he was reviled, reviled not again.” Wherefore, in that sacred department, if any where, it might be expected that disputes would be conducted with the utmost fairness, and with exemplary benignity of temper. Would it were always so!

“ The man who, in controversy, pays a strict regard to truth and candor, gives clear evidence of the excellence of his understanding and the uprightness of his heart ; whereas sophistry and quibble, rancorous invective and scurrilous abuse, warrant a suspicion of the advocate, however righteous be his cause.”

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## NUMBER LVI.

### *Of overdoing in governing children.*

As nothing more clearly evidences the weakness of a legislature than a strong propensity to multiply laws beyond what real and absolute need requires, so also is it in regard to domestic government. In families, as well as in larger communities, there often is too much Law. A few rules are necessary for the government of children, and but a few. These should be too plain to be misunderstood ; too reasonable to admit of any dispute or doubt ; and too important to be violated or neglected. They should be engraven early upon the memories of the children, and enforced, when need requires, with steady and inflexible firmness ;—and, by and by, they will grow into habits. Submission and obedience will become natural and spontaneous.

Children managed in this manner from infancy, and by parents too, whose examples comport with their rules and injunctions, and whose exercise of authority carries along with it evident marks of tender affection ;—children reared up under this steady, mild, and yet firm discipline, soon become tractable, except in extraordinary instances of perverseness. They feel the yoke to be easy, and are withheld from acts of disobey-

dience, more out of filial love and respect, than from the dread of chastisement. Hence it is that, in some houses, family government goes on with singular regularity, though so silent as to be scarcely perceived. There is no violent scolding ; no boisterous threats ; no fierce looks. Both the father and the mother, are so mild and even in temper and behaviour, that they seem scarcely to display any authority at all ; and yet their children are orderly, submissive, and dutiful, in a very uncommon degree. A single word, or a mere glance of the eye, from either the one or the other, they mind more than the children of some families do the pelting of hard blows.

Neither is it the only advantage of this method of family government, that it accomplishes its object the most effectually, and with the least trouble ;—there is another of equal, if not greater moment. Children thus managed are led to delight in the company and conversation of their parents, and to receive counsel readily from their lips : and when they come of age to act for themselves, the transition from the state of subjection to that of personal independence is easy, and scarcely perceivable. They don't feel like emancipated slaves. They are not intoxicated with liberty, but enjoy it soberly ; still looking back, with mixed emotions of respect and love, to the salutary discipline they had been under, and still accustoming themselves to consult their parents and to receive their advice with deference.

Nothing indeed is more clear, than that the simplest government is the best for children ; and yet this plain matter of fact is often overlooked, and that too, by some, of excellent minds and hearts. Many parents, of good sense and great moral worth, fearful of failing in their duty by not governing enough, run into the

opposite extreme. They maintain ■ reservedness, a distance, a stateliness toward their children, who hardly dare to speak in their presence, and much less to manifest before them any symptoms of the gaiety of their youthy hearts. They encumber them with a multitude of regulations ; they tire them with long lessons of stern monition ; they disgust and alienate them with a superabundance of sharp reproof ; they treat their little levities as if they were heinous crimes. Instead of drawing them with “ the cords of love,” they bind them fast with cords that are galling and painful.

This mistaken, though well intentioned, manner of family government, is very apt to draw after it several unhappy consequences. Children so brought up, how much soever they fear their parents, do rarely love them very much. However much they respect their virtues, they seldom yield them the warm affections of their hearts. Of some, it breaks the spirits, and renders them unenterprizing, tame and servile, in all the succeeding periods of their lives. Others, who have more native energy of mind and stiffness of heart, it makes exceedingly restless : and whenever these can get aside from parental inspection, they are particularly rude and extravagant in their conduct. With longing eyes they look forward to the day of emancipation from parental authority, as to a jubilee : and when the wished for time has come, they are like calves let loose from their stalls. The transition is so great and so sudden, that it wilders them ; and it often happens that their ruin is involved in the first use they make of their freedom.

They are wide of the true mark in family government, who make a mighty bustle about it. In their laudable attempts to excel in that way, they spoil all by overdoing.

## NUMBER LVII.

*Of Procrastination.*

THE nation from which we derive our language has been distinguished, above perhaps all others, for steady persevering industry: and several English old sayings, or proverbs, correspond with this prominent feature of national character. One of these ancient sayings of English origin, is, "Never to put off till to-morrow what may be done to day." On the contrary, sluggishness and procrastination, are national attributes of the Spaniards, who, though acting with great spirit and vigour whenever roused to action, continue slothful and dilatory at all other times. Nor is it a little remarkable, that there is a Spanish proverb directly of opposite meaning to the English one just now mentioned. Laborde, in his View of Spain, affirms it to be a Spanish proverbial maxim, "That one should never do to-day what may be put off till to-morrow."

Whether it be owing to nature, or to education and habit, or from whatever cause else it may spring, there is, in this goodly country, a prevailing disposition to follow the last of these two opposite maxims; though we all are ready to admit the reasonableness of its contrast. No infatuation is more deplorable, nor yet more general, the whole christianized world over, than the vain hope that leads us to put off from day to day the great work which must be done, or ourselves be forever undone. But I am now to speak not of the common and most deporable infatuation which relates to the concerns of immortality, but of that which concerns our temporal interests.—Of the fatal error of the former, the Holy Volume and the Pulpit give solemn

warning ;—of some of the mischiefs of the latter, it is mine to treat in this short essay.

Few things are more ruinous, even to our secular affairs, than customary procrastination. It confuses and blights every kind of worldly business ; for business not attended to in the proper time and season, is either not done at all, or done with more labour and difficulty, and to less purpose.

Some men are in the practice of letting their accounts lie unsettled for several years together. It is no matter forsooth ; they are near neighbours and close friends, and can come to a reckoning at any time. At length a settlement between them commences. The accounts of each, however honest, are swelled beyond the expectation of the other. On both sides, several items are vanished from the remembrance of him who is charged with them. A warm dispute ensues ; perhaps an arbitration ; peradventure an expensive lawsuit ;—and these close friends are severed forever.

Some men neglect to make their *Wills*, though they know their estates would be inherited contrary to their own minds and to the rule of equity, if they should chance to die intestate. Knowing this, and sincerely wishing that right may be done to their heirs, they are fully determined to perform the necessary act and deed, some time or other. “But why just now ? Another time will do as well.” And thus they delay the thing from year to year, till at last the time of doing it is gone by : a precious widow, or a beloved and deserving child, is left to suffer, through life, the bitter consequences of this default.

Some Farmers, double their labour, and lose half their profits, for want of doing things in the proper season. Their fields are overgrown with bushes and thorns, all which a little *seasonable* labour might have

prevented. Their fences, and even their buildings, are neglected, till the cost of repairs becomes increased several fold ; besides their sustaining a train of inconveniences and of serious injuries from the neglect.— And so also their crops cost more labour, and at the same time are leaner in bulk, or inferior in quality, by reason that much of the labour that had been bestowed upon them was out of season. Nor is it uncommon to see farmers of this sort in a mighty hurry and bustle. They are behind their business and running to overtake it ; which is the cause of their being so often in a greater hurry than their neighbours.

Many a one, loses his custom as a mechanic, by not doing his work in season. It makes no odds, he thinks, whether the thing be done precisely at the time agreed upon—but so think not his customers.

What does not a merchant lose, in custom, in credit, and in cash, by neglecting his books, though it be only a few months, or a few weeks. How hard does he find it to set to rights, what might easily been kept right if he had done the work of each day within the day.

Honest Jonathan, borrows a sum of money of his particular friend, on the express promise of scrupulous punctuality. He gets the money by the day : but being busy here and there, he delays to carry or send it. The money happens to be sorely wanted the very day it becomes due ;—and, with that particular friend, Jonathan's borrowing-credit is utterly lost.

His Reverence —, a clergyman of no mean abilities, appears below himself in the pulpit, merely from his having got into the practice of delaying preparations for the sabbath to the very last of the week; when, not unfrequently, company unexpectedly falls in, or he unexpectedly is called out: so that a considerable pro-

portion of his sermons, composed in the hurry of his spirits, bear no great analogy to the “*beaten oil*” of the sanctuary. A reversal of merely *timing* his preparations, would contribute as well to the comfort of the respectable gentleman himself, as to the edification of his hearers.

Doctor —— possesses undoubted skill in his profession, but loves talk better than practice. Called away in a case of pressing emergency, he sets out with speed; but meets an old acquaintance, to whom he opens a budget of news and politics, which takes him up half an hour in the relation; and by the time he arrives, all is over. Half an hour sooner, and his patient might have been saved.

Violent pains and fevery chills seize us. If they go not off, we will send for the physician to-morrow. Ere to-morrow arrives, the distemper gains a firmness of fixture that baffles the physician’s skill.

Hark! The cry of fear and dismay. The Small Pox! Our children have caught the contagion; we meant to have them vaccinated, but put it off, and the time for it is now past.

One instance more, and a common one.—“*Not ready*,” says the sharp-eyed lawyer, when the court is in waiting, and the patience of the witnesses is tired with long attendance.—And why not ready? Procrastination lies at the bottom. Here, however, procrastination itself turns to good account. The case is laid over, and the fees augmented:—it is only the pigeons that are plucked.

## NUMBER LVIII.

*Of general diffusion of knowledge.*

## PART I.

WHAT has been commonly termed the Republic of Letters, till a late period, had been no other than a monoplosing and overbearing aristocracy. The precious treasure was in the possession of only a few, who, with miserly feeling, locked it up from the mass of the people; communicating of it merely to one another, and their select pupils.

“Knowledge that is hid, and treasure that is locked up, what profit is in them both?” This question of the ancient sage that penned the book of Ecclesiasticus, carries its own answer along with it.

Of very little profit indeed to the world, were those philosophers of antiquity, whose philosophy was either wrapped up in mystery, or withheld from all but the initiated few. For as gold is of no service while it remains hoarded, and is made serviceable only when put in circulation, so also intellectual treasure can benefit mankind, only in so far as it is generally diffused.

The *Art of Printing*, produced an astonishing change in this important respect: a change that is still progressing, and that promises a most happy consummation. Ere its discovery, the whole rational world consisted of only two classes, namely, learned scholars and an illiterate vulgar; between which, there was very little of fellowship, or of any thing in common. Whereas Printing, by multiplying copies with so much ease, and furnishing books in such plenty and cheapness, soon began to break away that “middle wall of partition.” Yet it was not till a considerably late

period, that the tree of knowledge has been brought fairly within the reach of the multitude.

From the beginning of the last century, and thence up to the present day, literature and science have advanced chiefly by *diffusion*. In the former ages, there were giants in the literary departments: men of iron constitutions of body and mind, who, by indefatigable industry and patience of toil, treasured up in their minds and memories, such a prodigious abundance of learning as would now seem incredible. This race of *Anakim* is well nigh extinct, and of learning there are no living prodigies comparable to those of earlier time. Nevertheless, knowledge has rapidly progressed, by the general spread of it. No longer confined to scholars by profession, or inherited exclusively by the lordly sex, there now are, of both sexes, very many readers, who, without any pretensions to deep scholarship, have arrived to respectable degrees of information. The truth of it is, among those especially who speak the English tongue, there has risen up a *middle class*, aptly denominated *the Well Informed*.

And who are *These*? These are persons who, though not to be ranked with men of deep scholastic lore, nor by any means affecting such distinction, are, notwithstanding, possessed of a fund of useful knowledge, whether for conversation, or for the various practical purposes of life. They are often found, in short, to have a great deal more of *general practical* knowledge, than commonly falls to the lot of men of profound science or literature. For one who devotes himself to science alone, or to literature alone, however deeply intelligent in that single respect, must needs be ignorant as to most other things.

But the class of the Well Informed requires a more particular description. By no means does it include all readers, and much less all that *can* read.

Of those who *can* read, the greater part make very little use of this inestimable advantage, and are very little the wiser for it. Again, of those who *do* read, a large proportion choose, rather to be diverted or amused, than instructed. They *are* diverted; they *are* amused; but enlightened and informed in any respectable measure, they are not. There are great readers, both male and female, who in no wise are well informed. Either their reading is chaffy, and uninstructive, or they neglect to join with it the close exercise of their intellectual faculties; so that their judgments are not strengthened, nor their understandings enlarged, though an abundance of truths and facts are confusedly heaped together in their memories.

To attain the character of *Well Informed*, one must read with prudent selection as to books; with an attentive exercise of one's own reason and judgment; with close application of thought;—and one must improve one's own mind, not by reading only, but also by a living intercourse with intelligent society. For it is not in abstraction from the world, but in the bosom of society—of well regulated and well informed society—that the mind enjoys the best opportunities for obtaining expansion and vigour. Here alone, it experiences a genial warmth, and powerful stimulations to laudable exertions. Here alone is it, also, that the fallacies and errors of its own crude conceptions are corrected, by means of their frequent contact, comparison, and collision, with the conceptions of kindred minds.

The road is open. The means of information are so ample and so easy of access, that the reading youths of the present day, seem to have it fairly in their power to become well informed men and women. Two hours in the twenty-four, employed in well-directed intellectual industry, might suffice, in no very long course

of years, for gathering a respectable treasure of valuable knowledge. A person who should walk only one hour, or three miles and an half, every day, would, in the course of twenty years, have travelled as many steps as would reach round the globe.

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## NUMBER LVIII.

*Of general diffusion of knowledge.*

## PART II.

THE rapid progress of knowledge by *diffusion*, which I noticed in a former paper, is deeply important to the civil and moral interests of society. It is a probable fact, that the number of readers, particularly readers of English, has increased threefold in the last thirty years. Add to this ; there are making at the present instant, more strenuous and general efforts, by many degrees, for imparting the means of instruction to all classes of the people, than were ever made before. So that there is a fair prospect that the number of English readers will be threefold greater thirty years hence, than it is even now.

The nature and magnitude of the results cannot be fully conceived beforehand. No doubt there will be, in them, a mixture of good and ill, but there is reason to expect that the good will vastly preponderate.

One of the grand objects which so remarkably engage general attention at the present time, is to diffuse, as widely as possible, *a little learning* ; to impart it to the children of the indigent ; and, as far as may be practicable, to put it in the power of the whole rising generation to become readers. Learning ad-

mits of many degrees ; and while but few can possess it in any of the highest degrees, it is the darling project of the age we live in, that all should possess it at least in some of the lowest.

Now a Poet of great and deserved celebrity hath told us, that *a little learning is a dangerous thing*,—and has admonished, to drink of it *deep*, else not to taste at all. Nor has scarcely a maxim in Holy Writ, been quoted more frequently, or with greater confidence of its truth. The dogma and monition of the poet, are to be received, however, with no small degree of caution ; otherwise, there could be no encouragement for the general diffusion of learning, since it is only a *little*, that the generality can ever attain.

The two principal dangers which naturally arise from merely a little learning, are those of pedantry, and an aspiring temper. Let them both be viewed in a fair light.

At the time, when Pope penned the couplet to which I have reference, namely, in the early part of the last century, the bulk of the wealthy citizens even of London, especially of the female part, could neither write grammatically, nor spell correctly ; as appears by sundry papers of the Spectator. Now in such a state of society, it is no wonder that those of little learning were vain of that little, and made themselves more obnoxious to ridicule by their pedantry, than the utterly illiterate were for their ignorance. But if a little learning were a possession, or acquirement, quite common, very few would be vain of it. Seldom, if ever, would a man be vain of his riches, if all other men were alike rich, or a woman of her beauty, if all other women were as beautiful as herself. And, by a parity of reason, neither man nor woman could ordinarily be vain of such measures of learning as were in the possession of the multitude.

Hence it would seem to follow, that a general diffusion of learning would have a tendency to banish pedantry, rather than to increase the number of pedants. Yet, after all, some will be pedantic, and there is no help for it ; for it lies in the brain. A weak mind, whether imbued with a little learning or with much, is prone to pedantry ; of which, persons of strong, sound sense, are in no great danger, even though their learning be rather superficial than profound.

That a little learning, as well as much, naturally tends to awaken an aspiring temper, must indeed be admitted. The more general the diffusion of knowledge be, the greater will be the number of rival candidates for offices of honour and emolument ; and of course, the greater will be the number of the disappointed and restless—of those who would gladly sacrifice the repose of their country to the views of ambition and personal interest. So that, while the more general diffusion of knowledge will conduce to the greater equalization of mankind, it will also conduce to multiply bitter rivalries, unless the proper antidotes be seasonably applied.

Here, much, very much, will depend upon the *quality* of early Education.

Early education, of the truely *christian* character, by which the children are taught that the learning given them is for use, rather than show, and that the proper use of it is to meliorate their minds and hearts, and make them beneficial to society ; by which they are taught to controul their appetites, to govern their passions, to moderate their desires, and to be watchful over their thoughts as well as actions, as those who must give an account ; by which they are taught, in all cases to adhere inflexibly to truth and equity ; and by which they are taught to be submissive to lawful authority, to be contented with the conditions which

Providence allots them, and to seek the good of others as sincerely as their own :—*Such an early education, accompanied with the divine blessing, might prevent the pernicious consequences, that, otherwise, would so naturally spring out of a general diffusion of a small portion of learning.* But, if the morals of the children be utterly neglected, or but very slightly attended to, their learning, whether more or less, will render them wise for evil, rather than for good.

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## NUMBER LX.

*Of the adaptation of Education to the various callings of life.*

IN the wise economy of nature there is a remarkable correspondence between the common standard of human capacities and the common occupations of life ; in so much that a general *enlargement*, as well as a general *contraction* of the natural capacities of mankind while in this world, would be destructive to their interests. The first would set them *above* the ordinary business of life, while the last would reduce them *below* it ; and, in either case, the consequences would be deplorable. Wherefore, while the necessary degree of intellect is dispensed to all, the splendid gifts of genius have been dealt out with a sparing hand.

But let not blind presumption attribute this frugal economy to any lack of power or of benevolence in the great First Cause. With him it is no less easy to create a Homer or a Newton, than to create a worm ; nor is it possible that the *Father of lights* should grudge to impart a full necessary measure of the light of intellect. His wisdom and goodness are seen in what he with-

holds as well as in what he gives. If mankind generally were endowed with the capacious understanding of Bacon and Newton, or with the creative fancy of Shakespeare, while they would be "feeding on thought," and rapt in profound contemplations, or forming and combining in their minds innumerable gay and sportive images, there would be no man to till the ground ;— the agricultural and mechanical employments, upon which life depends, would be despised and neglected, and such a race of philosophers and poets would soon be consumed with famine. Now while there have been denied, to the generality, those splendid talents, which, generally possessed, would render men insubordinate, discontented and wretched ; such an average portion of understanding has been bestowed, as qualifies them for subsisting on the planet they are destined to inhabit. Idiots excepted, to all are given the germin of abilities sufficient to render them useful in some or other of the necessary occupations of life.

Now, in the business of Education, it is prudent to follow the order and footsteps of nature. The visionary notion once so prevalent, of converting the great mass of mankind into sage philosophers, is deserving of no other notice than that of ridicule or contempt. Were it to be effected, the order of nature would be deranged, the necessary laborious occupations of life would be scorned, and want and famishment would be the inevitable consequences. Any one is *well* learned who is fully adequate to his business and station. It is no disparagement or inconvenience to a farmer, a mechanic, or even a merchant, that he is not able to solve a problem in Euclid, or to construe Homer or Virgil ;— that he is not a proficient in the Newtonian philosophy, in Belles Lettres, or in any branch of scholarship else. If his learning be adequate to all the business of his

particular calling, and to the various relations he stands in toward his Maker and towards society, it is sufficiently extensive.

Whatever of learning that is entirely foreign to one's business, is very apt to be worse than useless to him. If a farmer, whose livelihood depends upon his bodily labour, should spend that time in investigating the *philosophy* of plants, which he ought to spend in *hoeing* them, he would merit ridicule and be sure to meet with poverty. A mechanic would quickly lose his customers, should he brandish his learning in their faces and attempt to entertain them with scientific harangues, instead of performing their work with despatch and neatness. Nor would a merchant thrive in trade, who should neglect his ledger for the study of Homer or Shakespeare; or who should be courting the muses when he ought to be posting his books or waiting upon his customers; or who should, in any way, sacrifice the character of diligence and punctuality to the ambition of distinction in learning or science.

This Latin adage will seldom fail—*Par negotiis neque supra*—That is, one should be equal to his business, but not above it. The misfortune of one's being educated *below* the business that one is destined to follow, is very apparent; and though less apparent, it is sometimes equally a misfortune to be educated *above* it. A common saying is—"It can do a child no harm to have learning." This is true in only a limited sense. While some learning is necessary to all, different degrees of it are requisite in different callings and professions; so that it is possible for one to have too much, as well as too little. Any kind of speculative knowledge or literary pursuit, that should cause a man to scorn his calling, or divert him from the diligent prosecution of it, would be, to him, a nuisance rather

than a benefit, and might prove the means of the utter ruin of his circumstances.

The world subsists by means of labour. This is the philosopher's stone that turns every thing to gold ; or, what is much better, it nourishes and supports the whole human family. Wherefore, if speculative pursuits, whether literary or scientific, were to divert the generality from their laborious occupations, the interests of humanity would be ruined rather than improved. If the great mass of mankind, neglecting their useful and necessary callings, should attempt to become connoisseurs in the fine arts, or learned philosophers and metaphysicians, or should spend their time in viewing the sun through a telescope, or insects through a microscope, or, like some European Academicians of the royal grade, in chasing butterflies and gathering cockle shells—such a universal deluge of learning, and of *minute* philosophers, would be nearly as fatal to the world as was the deluge of water in the time of Noah.

It follows from the foregoing remarks (if just and true,) that, for the ordinary business and callings of life, well-regulated common schools are sufficient, and even better than the abodes of profound science. Common learning, like cents and little pieces of silver, is daily and hourly needed in the general commerce of life ; whereas deep erudition is like large bank bills or ingots of gold—very needful in their place, but needful to only a comparative few.

## NUMBER LXI.

“ Nor less shall thy fair ones to glory ascend,  
 And genius and beauty in harmony blend :  
 The graces of form shall awake pure desire,  
 And the charms of the soul ever cherish the fire :  
 Their sweetness unmingle, their manners refined,  
 And Virtue’s bright image enstamped on their mind,  
 With peace, and soft rapture, shall teach life to glow,  
 And light up a smile in the aspect of woe.”

DR. DWIGHT.

MONTESQUIEU, speaking of the influence of the female sex on public morals and manners, says, “ The safety of a state depends on the virtues of the women.”

The truth of this sentiment might be evinced and illustrated by advertizing to the history of some of the most famous of the ancient nations, and particularly of those whose forms of government were of the republican kind. The most shining periods of their history were those in which the modesty, fidelity, economy, and various other domestic virtues of the female sex, inspired the men with noble sentiments, and prompted them to noble deeds ; and, on the other hand, the fatal harbinger of their fall and destruction was the declension of female virtue.

Women are the guides of infancy and childhood.—From them are received the first, and the most indelible impressions ; and their influence in society ever increases with the increase of civilization and social refinement. Through the benign influence of christianity, and by means of the general diffusion of knowledge and the superior refinement of taste and sentiment, *Woman* is now risen to a very important rank in social life. It is seen that she has a *mind*, as well as a *form* ; her capacity for intellectual improvements, and her right, in common with that of the other sex, to a parti-

cipation of intellectual enjoyments, are freely acknowledged. In the mean time the importance of female education is become a trite theme, on which the tongues and the pens of the learned and the ingenious have frequently descanted. Any attempt, therefore, to add to the numerous arguments in support of a sentiment already too obvious to be disputed, would be alike difficult and useless. But the question respecting the best modes and most useful objects of female education, both in regard to individual happiness, and the interests of the public, is well worthy of discussion.

Admitting—whatever be the real fact—that the sexes are equal as to mental powers, it is evident that their destinations are different. The female form, while more graceful, is inferior in point of strength, and of course less adapted to the rugged and perilous occupations and boisterous scenes of life. Female children are commonly less roving in their dispositions, and less turbulent and obstinate in their tempers:—they are more docile and more domestic, than those of the other sex. Hence it plainly appears to be the ordination of nature, (I mean *the Eternal Wisdom*) that woman should be employed chiefly in the various business of the domestic kind. And, as the designs of nature are never thwarted with impunity, so, those women, who, disdaining the feminine sphere, usurp the business and ape the manners of men, are punished for this usurpation by the loss of their attractions. The spectacle of a Hercules plying at the distaff, or that of a venerable judge taking his seat in a female dishabille, would scarcely be more absurd and ridiculous, than that of a woman affecting the air, the manners, and the peculiar pursuits of the other sex.

Now, as the business of education is not to thwart, but to assist the designs of nature, it is clear that the

general scheme of female instruction should be appropriate to the female character and sphere of action.

A zealous advocate for the rights of women, who is accustomed to follow theory rather than the track of nature, might allege, that, as their capacities are competent to the profoundest investigations and disquisitions, any limitation to their pursuits in literature or the sciences, is an abridgement of those intellectual privileges and enjoyments, which they ought to possess, in common with men. But without calling in question the strength of female intellect, or attempting to abridge its charter of rights, I would offer for consideration the following queries:—Are not they the *happiest* among women, who are contented within the circle of such enjoyments, pursuits, and amusements, as are principally of the domestic kind?—Does woman ever appear so graceful and lovely, as in the domestic characters and relations of a dutiful daughter and affectionate sister—of a loving and faithful wife—of an excellent mother, rearing up her offspring and guiding them in wisdom's ways—of a discreet mistress of a family, combining prudent economy with hospitality?—Finally, would not any man of sense and correct taste, choose to be connected in marriage with a woman of a plainly cultivated understanding, an obliging temper, domestic in her habits, and capable and disposed to guide his household affairs with discretion, rather than with a *Mary Wollstonecraft*, who handed wine to a gentleman-visitor *in a broken tea cup*—excusing herself, that she was too much occupied in literary matters to pay any attention to the furnishing of her room?

One of the brightest ornaments of her sex and of human nature itself, remarks:—“The profession of women, to which the bent of their instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers and mis-

tresses of families. They should therefore be trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas, and principles, and qualifications and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of their respective situations."—And again, when speaking of embellishments, or the showy and ornamental parts of female education, she observes :—Though the arts which merely embellish life must claim admiration ; yet when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and dress, and dance ; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him ; one who can reason, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and act, and discourse, and discriminate ; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, sooth his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children."\*

It is for the *Daughters* of our America to co-operate in supporting and perpetuating the independence, and the many inestimable privileges, which her *Sons* have achieved by their valour, and with their blood. On the purity of *their* morals, and the prudence and propriety of *their* conduct, the permanence and the weal of this great Republic, and the hopes of generations to come, are essentially depending.

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## NUMBER LXII.

*Of cruelty to the brute animals—instanced in the barbarous usage of that noble animal, the Horse.*

THE Horse, more frequently than any other of the inferior animals, has been the subject of descriptive po-

\* Miss Hannah More.

etry ; and that, not so much by reason of his beautiful form and generous nature, as on account of the superb figure he makes in the battles of the warriors.

In the book of Job, which is the oldest poem in the world, and, as to some parts of it, one of the sublimest, the war-horse is described in a manner superior to any thing of the kind that can be found in other authors. In reading this description, even in our English prose translation, one seems actually to behold the horse himself, now "pawing in the valley" with eagerness for the battle, and then "going forth to meet the armed men"—"mocking at fear." It is not the mere *picture* of the Arabian war-horse : we seem to see him prance, paw the ground, and rush forward to the battle, rejoicing in his strength.

Old Homer has given several fine descriptions of the war-horse. His battles were fought in chariots, and his horses bore a conspicuous part in the glory of the frays. The following four lines in Pope's translation of Homer, are horribly picturesque.

" The horses' hoofs are bath'd in human gore,  
And, dashing, purple all the ear before ;  
The groaning axle sable drops distils,  
And mangled carnage clogs the rapid wheels."

The three last lines in the following stanza, being part of Maurice's ode to *Mithra*, give as magnificent a description of the war-horse, as perhaps can be found any where except in the book of Job.

" Instant a thousand trumpets sound,  
A thousand chiefs in arms appear,  
And high their glittering banners bear ;  
The harness'd steed responsive neighs,  
And while his footsteps spurn the ground,  
His eye-balls burn, his nostrils blaze."

In the last line of all, the poet probably had his eye upon this passage in Job—" The glory of his nostrils is terrible."

My intention in making these splendid quotations is not so much, however, to eulogize the horse, as to vindicate him from the unfeeling cruelty of man.

The horse, in his wild state, while traversing the forests of Asia, is represented by travellers as being the happiest of animals ; living perpetually in the society of his kind and in the enjoyment of freedom and plenty. Freedom is not, however, one of the rights of his nature. He is destined to come under the dominion of man, and to minister to the service and to the pomp and pageantry of this lord of the lower creation. Man has a charter right to this animal from the registry of heaven. He has a right to use him as not abusing him ; to be his lord and master, but not his unfeeling tyrant. And it might have been expected that the superior excellence of this creature, his wonderful usefulness, both in war and peace, the beauty of his form and the nobleness of his nature, would have protected him from wanton cruelty : and yet there is no animal else that men are in the habit of treating so cruelly. The noxious animals have their lives taken from them at once. Few possess the ferociousness of disposition that would delight to put to death a fox, or even a wolf, by lingering tortures. But the horse experiences this horrible treatment from the hands of man, in a thousand instances. Backed, or driven, by an unfeeling human monster—in the attire perhaps of a gentleman—his sides are goaded with the spur, or his flanks lashed with the whip, till he faints, falls, and expires in dumb agony : and then he is substituted by another, and that by another yet, to the number perhaps of half a dozen ; which all, each in his turn, are tortured to death—and that, not to save human life, but for the sake of conveying with unrivalled speed, a speech, or an article of news,

that would suffer no damage though it arrived a few hours later.

What would a disciple of Pythagoras say in this case? or what would he say in innumerable other cases of unfeeling barbarity used toward a creature so estimable for his usefulness, his faithfulness, and his courage? Assuredly he would say, "These christians will have their reward. In the next stage of their existence, they will be compelled to do penance in the bodily form of the animal they have so wantonly abused." But, fiction apart, we are fully assured, upon divine authority, that without mercifulness of disposition and conduct we are not entitled to the expectation of finding mercy; and that "a merciful man, is merciful to his beast."

Mark this!—There is no worse sign, in children, nor any thing more necessary to be nipt in the bud, than a strong propensity to exercise cruelty upon the brute creatures within their power. It was the sport of Nero's boyhood, to impale flies upon the point of a needle; of his manhood, it was the sport, to inflict every kind of torture upon his fellow beings.

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### NUMBER LXIII.

*Of the vainness of trying to please every body—instanced in the authentic story of the minister's wig.*

THERE is a happy medium betwixt the heartless disposition to please nobody, and the absurd aim to please every body; and fortunate are they who find this middle line, and keep to it so steadily as seldom to run into the extreme on either side.

It is no good sign to be indifferent with respect to what the world thinks or says of us, since it would argue either a fulness of pride, or a total lack of sensibility. This would be the character of such indifference, were it real ; but, in truth, it is mere affectation or pretence. If we except those that are at the very bottom of the scale of human life, and only a small proportion even of them, it may be fairly concluded that no man nor woman, is altogether indifferent about the good or bad opinion of fellow beings. So far from it, the few who lay claim to this unamiable distinction have been found, generally speaking, peculiarly rancorous and vindictive toward such as made free with their characters, or had merely spoken disrespectfully of their talents. No authors, for example, have writhed with more agony under the merited lash of criticism, or been more jealous and vindictive, than some of those who pretended to look down with cold scorn upon the whole fraternity of critics.

Social qualities and feelings are among the primitive ingredients of our nature, and to divest ourselves of them would be to divest ourselves of humanity itself. They are rather to be cherished and cultivated, every way, and by all lawful means. It is not only right but laudable, to wish to be generally esteemed and beloved —to cultivate friendships—to avoid giving unnecessary offence—and to conform to the feelings and customs of those about us, so far as may be done with a good conscience, and consistently with one's personal circumstances. It is not only right but laudable, to make it a part of our own pleasure to please others ; and when we are compelled to differ with them, to do it, if possible, without rancour or bitterness.

There is such a thing as a union of condescension and firmness ; and a happy thing it is. To conde-

scend in things indifferent, in things trivial, in things that touch not the conscience, nor seriously endamage or endanger one's earthly interest and welfare ; and meanwhile to go not a step farther for any persuasion whatever ; no, not to please one's nearest friends—that is the golden mean.

As some pretend to care for none, there are those who, on the other hand, try to please all, by becoming—not in its best sense—"all things to all men." Some do it from selfish designs altogether ; and others from a too great persuadableness of temper and yieldingness of heart. These last can't bear, in any case, to be opposed or to oppose : and so they readily fall in with the sentiments and views of their present company, and side with every man they meet. Often this pliability of mind or temper is owing to a sort of amiable weakness, but it is destructive of all respectability of character.

I know not how to illustrate this point better than by the following story, which, as to substance and pith, may be regarded as undoubtedly true.

Some very long time since, Parson M——, of Massachusetts (then a British colony,) happening at Boston, bought him a wig there, and returning home, wore it at church the next sabbath. As a wig of such a size and shape was quite a novelty in that obscure place, it gave offence to almost the whole congregation, who, both male and female, repaired the next day to their minister's house, and stated their complaint, the burden of which was, that the wig was one of the Boston *notions*, and had the look of fashion and pride. The good-natured minister, thereupon, brought it forth, and bade them fashion it to their own liking. This task they set about in good earnest, and, with the help of scissors, cropped off lock after lock, till at last they all

declared themselves satisfied—save one,—who alledged, that wearing any wig at all, was, in his opinion, a breach of the commandment, which saith, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath.” This last objector Mr. M— silenced, by convincing him that the wig, in the condition it then was, did not resemble any thing either above or below.

Even so fares it with the characters that make it their aim to please every body. Slashed on this side and on that, and twisted into every shape and out of all shape, they finally come to the condition of his reverence’s wig.

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#### NUMBER LXIV.

##### *Of the easiness of the transition from christian civilization to comparative barbarism.*

THE philosophers of the last age expatiated often and largely on the felicitous condition of savages. Those simple children of nature, they held up to view as models of human excellence, and as possessing the greatest sum of human enjoyment. With minds unwarped by prejudice, and with hearts unsophisticated, and true to the genuine impulses of nature, their lives reflect, forsooth, the express image of primeval innocence. Knowing neither the galling fetters of law, nor the unnatural and odious distinctions of civilization, they, free as the air they breathe, roam their forests, or together enjoy the sports and pastimes of social intercourse, without obstacle or hindrance. And what though their dwellings are smoky cabins, or nothing

better than dens and caves of the earth ? What though their raiment, if raiment they have, is foul and squalid ? And what though their scanty food is rancid and loathsome ? No matter. Being always accustomed to this way of living, they desire nothing better, and without any repinings or discontent, they joyfully receive what nature gives. Happy savage ! happy in comparison with civilized man, pining under the cruel power of prohibition, doomed to delve the earth or plow the ocean, the slave of artificial wants, the prey of ambition and avarice. Thrice happy savage ! Three-fold more happy than the child of restraint, of labour, and of care ; threefold more happy than the slavish muckworm of civil society, maugre all his superfluous wealth and his boasted arts and institutions.

Such were the dreams of former days, even of days not long past. But they are known now to be *but* dreams. Subsequent discoveries have confounded the philosophism of Rousseau, and put to shame the disciples of his school. *Many have run to and fro, and knowledge has been increased.* Great indeed, and far beyond all former example, has been the accession of knowledge, within the last forty years, respecting the habiters of our globe. Travellers and voyagers, have traversed as it were the whole living world in every direction. New regions have been explored. Nations and tribes formerly unknown, or scarcely known, have been closely inspected ; their morals, their manners, and their modes of living, carefully noted and accurately described.—And the results are unfavourable, alike to the condition and to the character of the mere child of nature. It is found that the dim lights, which are beheld here and there amidst the thick darkness of the pagan world, sprang from patriarchal tradition ; that even in civilized countries in no wise il-

lumed with the rays of the gospel, the most abominable idolatries and the most horrible practices in social and domestic life, are sanctioned by long and immemorial custom; and that the child of nature, the mere savage, "is every where found to be a restless, unfeeling, treacherous, and ferocious animal."

There is one respect, however, in which philosophism has been not altogether in the wrong. It is, that the savage state is the most *natural*, that is to say, the most congenial with the depraved feelings and propensities of the human kind. Well-ordered, social institutions are mounds which virtue erects against vice, and which vice is ever struggling to demolish. Whereas, in what is called the state of nature, every man does what seemeth him good; indulging, with little or no restraint, in whatever his heart inclines him to. And, of all things in the world, this the sweetest; more gratifying than "to be clothed in purple, to drink in gold, and to sleep upon gold." Nothing is more natural to man, than the love of liberty, or more delicious to his heart, than the uncontrolled enjoyment of it:—of the liberty of doing as he pleases; of openly acting, every way, and in all cases, according to his inclinations, without dread of punishment or fear of shame. Upon this liberty—which indeed is the only liberty for which our fallen nature has a sincere and unreserved liking—the laws of regular government, the customs and opinions of virtuous society, and above all, the institutes of a most holy religion, are galling checks.

Hence it is, in a considerable part, that the transition from civilization to savageness is much easier, than from the latter condition to the former. Almost ever, a savage feels a decided preference for his own way of life, and looks down upon the accumulated conveniences of civilized man, not with a cold indifference, but

with utter disgust and contempt. Not for all the wealth that the world could confer would he barter his liberty. If you take away a savage boy, and bring him into the bosom of civilized society, he pines for his native wilds. Though you feed and clothe, and instruct him, and even caress him as your own child, he still pines with discontent. Or even, if perchance you get him to be apparently satisfied with his new situation, after a short sojourn with savages, he becomes as much a savage as ever. But though the ascent is hard and painful, the descent is easy. A boy, taken from civilized life and made to live with savages, how soon he is identified with them, in feeling, as well as in manners!—When brought back, after a few years, to his native home, how difficult, how next to impossible it is to dissolve the charm that had fastened itself upon him; to cure him of his wildness; to make him steady, and industrious, and satisfied under the wholesome restraints of law and religion. It is not theory, but experience, that speaks in this wise.

Nor are these the only instances with which experience furnishes us. There is one, of much greater importance, and of far deeper interest: it is the apparent unconcern, not to say eagerness, with which multitudes of our countrymen recede from civilized life.—Look! what perpetual streams of emigration, from the bosom of civilized and religious society, to the outskirts of the living world. Look! how new levies of the *forsaken hope*, eagerly advance forward, year by year, beyond the last ulterior limits; leaving behind them regions of wilderness, thinly chequered here and there with marks of cultivation.

“ The world is all before them where to choose.”

See the population of an immense frontier, a population of millions “ of our own colour, flesh and blood,”

nearly as destitute of evangelical means as the savage “ who yells on the banks of the Missouri”—without schools, without a ministry, without religious institutes, without the sabbath, without bibles ; sunk and still sinking into the depths of moral debasement ; their children rearing up under the blasting influence of an unchristian culture, with scarcely any sense of moral or religious obligation !

Not that no part of the spectacle is cheering. The sight of so many frightful wilds, the dreary haunts of ravening beasts, turned into fruitful fields, is delightful, at the same time that it reflects credit upon the industry, the enterprize, the hardihood, and the perseverance of our countrymen. But it is progressing too fast. There are few, if any, even of those old settlements, whose population is yearly drained away by thousands, which might not, by improved cultivation, by husbanding all their resources, and by returning to the plain living of former times, be made to support even a great increase of population, while their superior intellectual, social, moral, and religious advantages, would much more than countervail any advantages obtainable by emigrating into foreign deserts. The emigrations are not, however, from the old settlements only. The roving spirit of the Tartar and the Arab, seems to have seized the Americans. Even when a recent frontier is scarcely populated in the proportion of the twentieth part of it, they begin to remove further out ; as if it be the object nearest their hearts, to recede as far as possible from the very appearance of civilization.

## NUMBER LXV.

*A comment upon a celebrated Allegory of Antiquity.*

A celebrated ancient philosopher of the pagan school, has represented human nature under the similitude or analogy of a chariot drawn by two horses ; the one, of excellent mettle and lively motion ; and the other, sluggish and obstinate : so that while the former sprung forward, his mate hung back. And it must be owned, there is a striking aptness in this little allegory.

Of all the animals in the whole living world, none are seen to act inconsistently, but those of Adam's race. The lower animals, acting from what we call blind instinct, are nevertheless, uniform and consistent in their conduct ; while ourselves, who proudly lay claim to the high endowments of Reason, run into inconsistencies and absurdities every day of our lives. We know the right, and approve it ; we see the wrong, and condemn it : and after all, very often the right we reject or forsake, and the wrong we pursue.

This marvellous phenomenon, namely, the disjointed condition of human nature and the perpetual variance of man with himself, has been plainly visible in all ages ; and oft and many a time, has mole-eyed philosophy puzzled herself in vain to account for it. It used to be thought by the engrossers of the wisdom of this world, that the mind and the body were unequally yoked together ; that the former, being of celestial mould was naturally inclined to mount upward, and that the latter ever checked the noble flights of its yoke-fellow, forcing it back again to kindred earth. The wise Son of Sirach seems to have possessed a tincture of this fashionable philosophy, when he remarked, “ *The corruptible body weigheth down the soul.*”

For which reason, the body has met with hard and scurvy usage among religionists of different schools. The bigots of paganism, and the bigots of popery in the dark age, regarding their bodies as clogs to, and polluters of, their nobler part ; they proceeded to treat these unworthy copartners with unmerited scorn and cruelty.

Revelation, fairly understood, sets this whole matter in a clear light. In it we see, whence sprang the strange inconsistency in human nature, and from it we learn that, as neither the soul can subsist in the present state without the body, nor the body without the soul, so it behooves that they live together in harmony—provided the inferior be never permitted to get the upperhand, but be kept at all times in due subjection to its superior.

But leaving this momentous subject to abler pens, I crave the license of considering the fabulous chariot of Plato in a different, and peradventure, a new, point of view. The *twain*, that have entered together into the covenant of marriage, “are no more twain, but one flesh.” And yet, they are frequently seen to pull in different directions, so that the chariot either stands still, or is rent by the struggle.

In one instance there is seen an industrious, tidy, and frugal wife, yoked to a lazy and squandering husband, who wastes his time, here and there, about nothing, or spends it, along with his money, at a neighbouring dram-shop ; while she on her part, strains every nerve and fibre of exertion barely to save herself and her little ones from hunger and nakedness.

In another instance is seen a husband of sober life and frugal habits, labouring in his field or workshop from morn to eve ; whilst his rib takes her ease ; neglects the care of her household ; idles away her time ; is wasteful and prodigal, and scatters even faster than he can gather.

*Fungus* takes double duty upon himself. Although he has a wife competently capable and well-disposed to do her part, he is ever overseeing and governing her concerns. His vigilant eye is peeping about, from parlour to kitchen and from kitchen to parlour, looking into every dish, and at every thing that is going on, that he may find something to regulate, or some subject of *manly* criticism.

*Vixenna*—unlike the truly politic wife described by Pope, who, though “she rules her husband, never shows she rules”—*Vixenna*, on the contrary, is ambitious to make her own power known. Her husband, poor man, is fain to give account to her, of all the items of his business, and to receive directions and mandates from her lips, day by day, as well before company as behind the curtain.

Some partners in wedlock, thwart one another as to the important matter of governing and disciplining their children. For instance, the boy that is corrected by the father, and but reasonably corrected, looks to the mother to take his part, and to give it back to her conjugal inmate in angry grimaces, hard words, and menacing gestures. This is the sure way to rear up children for the purpose of being trampled down by them.

We are apt to regard a condition in life as positively bad, whenever it is attended with any prominent circumstance of an unpleasant nature. And hence it is thought, that unless there be much suavity of disposition on both sides, marriages must needs be unhappy; and, moreover, that those matches are the most promising, in which each partner is most like to each. But otherwise, in a great many instances, is the language of experience. Virtuousness of character being understood, it is not every degree of unlikeness in point of

natural temper, that tends to render this connection incompatible with a good share of peace and quiet. On the contrary, the choleric and the cool, the lively and the grave, the talkative and the taciturn, the peevish and the placid, often are found well sorted together. Theirs is like the harmony of different sounding chords ; and if now and then it be transiently interrupted by a discordant note, it is presently restored.

In a word, it is beyond calculation, how much can be done by good husbands towards making good wives, and by good wives towards making good husbands.

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## NUMBER LXVI.

*Of forgetting old debts, and shuffling off the payment of small ones.*

THERE is a pretty large number of men in this country, who, though not of the Hebrew stock, do, nevertheless, cleave fast to that part of the old Mosaical law, which enjoins a *Release*.\* They think, or seem to think, that the debts owed by them are by so much the less binding, by how much the older they have grown, and that when they come to be *seven years* of age, they are of course cancelled in the chancery of equity and conscience. This is more particularly the case as respects small debts ; about which a great many, otherwise of good memories, have a convenient lack of recollection.

The following story I have heard related as matter of fact :—No very long while since A. lent his neigh-

\* 25th Chapter of Deuteronomy.

bour B. a small sum of money, to be repaid in one week. However, without any thing being said about it on either side, it ran on a whole year, when the lender asked for the money, and got a prompt renewal of the old promise of payment in a week's time. In the same way it was permitted to run on another year, when the loan was craved again, and again was the same promise renewed. At the end of the third year, A. solicited payment the third time, and in the presence of a third person : and receiving nought but a new edition of the like fair promise, he expressed his determination of speedily doing himself justice, and went his way in a pet. B. was amazed at this uncourteous behaviour—for they had ever before been loving friends—he was struck with amazement, and, addressing himself to the said third person, remarked : “ That neighbour of mine, sir, I must needs say, is a worthy man in the main, but after all, he is an oddity. The trifling debt, do you see, is an old affair, an affair of several years' standing, and yet he duns me as hard as if I had borrowed the money but a month ago !”

It is a curious fact, of no very auspicious omen, that while most other things have been growing dearer, promises have been growing cheaper. They are come to be like that kind of drug that operates speedily, or not at all. They become stale as it were by time ; so that the longer the exaction of performance is forborne, the more difficult it is to obtain it. Hence small debts that are waxen old, are as bad as lost, being scarcely worth the trouble of collecting.

Nor is it altogether among the baser sort that this delinquency is found. You may find it among men of high standing, and of honourable feelings in most other respects. They would scorn the imputation of meanness, or falsehood, or roguery ; but nevertheless, per-

mit themselves to forget their promises, especially in little matters, and the rather, perhaps, from thinking that their creditors, out of respect or fear, would as lief lose the debts as urge for payment in good earnest. It is found, often found, among men, mild in temper, courteous in their manners, kind and neighbourly, hospitable in their houses, and, in short, of excellent reputations, save this single particular. If you are in distress, and need their charity, they will *give* ; but if they owe you, they will shuffle off payment without any regard to your interest or feelings.

Marvellous inconsistency ! Are they so blind as not to see that withholding just dues, of however small amount, is positive injustice ? That it scarce makes any difference, on the moral scale, whether one filches from his neighbour, or intentionally withholds what belongs to him ? Are they unaware that it destroys their credit and blots their reputations ? That it attaches to them a general suspicion of want of principle, or rather of wilful falsehood and dishonesty ? Are they unaware of the smothered indignation that burns in the bosoms of those they so lightly disappoint ? Of the hard and bitter things that are privately said of them on this account, even by their friends ? Or, finally, are they unaware that the public interest suffers more from this species of evil than from all the theft and robbery committed in the land ; and that if all men acted, in this respect, like themselves, there would be an end to private credit and mutual confidence ?

Small debts are entitled to be regarded as debts of honour. A man of strict honour and competent means, will be particularly careful to discharge, spontaneously and punctually, those trifling debts, which it is so unpleasant even to ask for, and much more to *dun* for over and over again. A man of strict honesty will say not

to his neighbour, “ Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will pay,” when he has it by him. Instead of which, it is his settled rule, as far as his circumstances will permit, to pay without delay, without hesitation, without grudging, without giving his neighbour the trouble and pain of repeated requisition and importunate solicitations.

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## NUMBER LXVII.

### *Of devotedness to Pleasure.*

IT is an irrefragable maxim, as well of experience as of revelation, that, *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man.* Indeed scarce any maxim is so fully sanctioned by experience ; since, in all ages, and among all ranks and classes, an inordinate love of pleasure has proved the certain road to want and ruin.

Most strikingly verified is this sacred text, in the instances of drunkards and debauchees, who give up themselves, soul and body, to the embraces of pleasure, in her grossest and most disgusting forms. Always and every where, these profligates, after a short run, come out not merely poor men, but poor *creatures.* Inevitably, and very shortly, they become the poorest of the poor ; alike destitute in circumstances and contemptible in character ; a burden to their friends, and a heavier burden to themselves.

Mark the young beginner in the career of profligacy ; one not of the baser, nor even of the common sort—a child of fortune, a heritor of wealth. How accomplished ! how blithe and jovial !

Mark him again, in his next stage, when youth is just ripened into the maturity of manhood.

“ If thou beest he, but O how fallen ! how changed !”

See his bloated countenance, his livid cheek, his beamless eye !

Once more, mark his mid-age. The crop is now fully ripe. See what it is !—squalid poverty ; loathsome disease ; bodily decrepitude and mental imbecility ; alike loathsome and self-loathing.

Finally, mark his end. “ This man of pleasure, when after a wretched scene of vanity and woe, his animal nature is worn to the stumps, wishes and dreads death, by turns.”—Now he is sick of life, and bitterly chides the tardiness of time :—anon he starts back with horror, lest the grave should not prove a “ dreamless bed.”

The classes of downright drunkards and debauchees, include, however, but a small proportion of the hapless mortals whom the siren *Pleasure*, allures to their ruin and destruction.

“ Come on, let us enjoy the good things that are present. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds, before they be withered.”\* With such language it is that the sorceress persuades and prompts the youthful heart ; nor does she persuade and prompt in vain. The delicious poison insinuates itself, and spreads over the whole frame. The youth, thus infected, becomes unstable in all his ways. All close and steady application, whether to study or to business, he heartily loathes. Plodding industry of every kind, he regards with scorn. To make as it were a holiday of the whole year round, is the object of his desire and the summit of his ambition. As years multiply upon him, his habits of fickleness are but the more riveted. He is within the circumference

\* 2d Chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon.

of a whirlpool, with a heart and mind too enervated to force his way back. Perhaps he remains, however, on the extremity, and never, in his whole life time, is drawn to the fatal centre, where is utter wreck of reputation and of the whole moral frame. Perhaps he escapes the grosser vices. Perhaps no foul blot cleaves to his character, and the worst which can be said of him is, that he is a careless, imprudent, and improvident man, a mighty lover of jolly company ; that he is here, and there, and every where, except at home and about his own proper business.

Lucky indeed, if he be no worse off : but lucky as he is, he must needs be *a poor man* ; poor in worldly circumstances, and of a character almost worthless at the best. If left with ■ fortune, it melts away in his improvident hands. If he begins the world without fortune, he lays up nothing for sickness and old age ; instead of which, he ever lives beyond his income, by leeching his friends, and abusing the confidence of his creditors. If he have a family, his wife mingles her scanty meal with her tears, while their children receive little from him but an example that powerfully tends to lead them astray. In short, he is exactly such as no downright honest and honourable man would choose to be. If all were like him, poverty, wretchedness and misery, would pervade the whole fabric of human society.

It needs scarcely be added, that a lover of pleasure (even one of the comparatively innocuous sort last mentioned) seldom enjoys his proportionable share of that commodity. At best, his empty pleasure is so mixt up with vexation of spirit, that he more abundantly feels the one than enjoys the other. Not to mention, that an idle, useless life, however free from gross immorality, is, in the sight of heaven, a criminal life ; it

is burying the talent that ought to have been employed diligently, and to useful purposes.

We have received our earthly existence, not on conditions of our own prescribing, but on the conditions prescribed by him who made us. With respect to the present life, as well as the future one, it is to be expected that the quality of the harvest will be the same as that of the seed. If we eat up the seed, we prevent the crop. If we sow the tares of idleness and prodigality, we shall reap the tares of poverty and shame.—There is no such thing as abolishing, or bending, or evading the fixed laws of nature; whether we like them or not, they will go steadily into effect.

See you a young man diligent in his business, frugal, provident and sober? You see one who will be respected and respectable, who, in all probability, will enjoy, through life, at least a competence, and who will be a blessing to his family, to his friends, and to society at large. On the other hand, when you see young men idle, improvident, extravagant, averse from all regular and close attention to useful business, and practically saying, in the general course of their lives, "Go to now, let us enjoy pleasure;" you then see such as are speeding, if not into atrocious crimes, at least into the condition of beggarly want; such as will wring the hearts of fathers, mothers, wives and children; such as will be *moths* upon society, rather than its useful and worthy members.

Even worldly interest, imperiously requires self-denial. One who can deny himself of nothing, will be good for nothing, however excellent be his talents, and however great his advantages. To learn youths the art of self-denial, is one of the essential branches of good education. That is best done by storing their minds, seasonably, with the precepts, prohibitions, and

warnings, contained in the Holy Bible. Next to this, they should by all means be kept from contracting habits of idleness and dissipation, and be so inured to some kind or other, of laudable industry, that their very toil, whether of business or of study, will at length be a pleasure.

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### NUMBER LXVIII.

*Of Vainness, or Vanity, as making part of the warp of our general nature.*

VANITY, or the undefinable human quality called by that name, being the subject now under consideration, the following plain little story is somewhat proper to open with.

The Baron de Tott, happening to come, of a sudden, into the company of a knot of Turkish ladies, who from the usage of their country and the precepts of their religion, were in duty bound to be veiled always in the presence of strangers of the other sex ; he remarks, in the book of his travels, that the elderly matrons made haste to veil themselves, but the young and the handsome remained with their faces uncovered for some time after his entrance.

Now if this be a notable instance of *female* nature, it springs, nevertheless, from a principle belonging to the general nature of our species, and which operates with nearly equal force, in both sexes. It is not Woman alone that is vain :—“ Surely every *Man* walketh in a vain show”—at least in some one respect or other.

There scarcely is any single ingredient that more thoroughly pervades human nature, than the one that goes by the general name of *Vanity*. Hence it was to

vanity that the cunning tempter addressed his temptation in the garden, with such deplorable success ; and to vanity he addressed his temptations in the wilderness, where he was so signally foiled. He knew the weakest side of humanity, and there made his attacks.

The strange quality called vanity, is a particular modification of the general principle of selfishness, and is exactly the reverse of the scriptural precept, *Let each esteem other better than himself.* It would be difficult to define it, and still more difficult to describe it in all its symptoms, and trace it throughout all its numerous branches : and yet, if you observe, with a close and discriminating eye, it is impossible to mistake it ; for to the mind's ken, it is clearly visible, in its every shape, however undefinable and indescribable.

Vanity is as it were “ the froth of pride,” and is distinguishable from downright unmixed pride, which is stiff and unbending : whereas vanity is flexible, and bends any way, and every way, to set itself off.\* But though vanity is different in some respects from pride, it has, in its nature, perhaps quite as much selfishness ; self-display being its constant and invariable object, or rather the pole-star, towards which its every thought and every action tend.

Although the principal food of vanity, is wealth, rank, learning, wit, beauty, eloquence, strength, valour, or the whatever something that distinguishes the individual from the multitude ; yet it can live, and thrive, on food of almost every kind and nature. “ We may see vanity living in a hovel, vanity clothed in rags, vanity begging by the way, vanity conjoined with bodily ugliness and deformity :” it is to be found, as well in savagery, as in civilized life, as well amongst the squalid

\* Unmingled pride is portrayed with no less truth than genius, in the Coriolanus of Shakespeare, and in the Princes of the fallen angels, of Milton.

and beggarly race of gypsies, as in polished society. In a word, it can find nourishment and gratification in all extremes—in the haggard looks and squalid habiliments of a hermit, provided they confer distinction—as much as in brocades, pearls and diamonds. It is quite as much gratified with the distinction of *Humility*, as with that of loftiness and splendor. If a Cardinal of the Romish church is vain of the lofty title, *His Eminence*, the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople is probably no less vain of the humble title, *His Lowliness*. Nor was the vanity of the most lordly and aspiring of all the Popes of Rome, ever more gratified, perhaps, than when, under the gaze of the public, they were employed, upon their knees, in washing the feet of some of their beggarly vassals. In sober truth, vanity is never more conveniently lodged, than when she lies concealed under the disguise of eminent humility.

Sometimes, Vanity, to gain her point, disclaims even her own existence. *I say it without vanity—I speak is without the least ostentation*—is often made the prelude to self-commendation.

It is questionable whether man would be a *laughing* animal, if he were not a *vain* one. But, without all question, it is vanity that most generally affects his risibles when he laughs at his fellow man.

In many instances, Public Virtue would never have gone so far, if Vanity had not borne it company. Jehu, for example, never had driven so furiously to carry forward a holy cause, had not vanity rode with him.—  
“ *Come see my zeal!*”

What is called Liberality, frequently is nothing more than the vanity of giving. We are exceedingly prone to give, (whenever we give at all) hoping to receive—if not in kind, at least in credit and honour. So, also, Vanity gives praise, in hopes of receiving it back again with interest.

It is owing to vanity that we voluntarily endure unhappiness, to appear happy; that we rob ourselves of necessaries, to appear as if our circumstances were plentiful and affluent. Many a one is at more expense in maintaining Vanity's brood, than it would cost him to bring up, in a plain way, a family of children.

Vanity undervalues itself with a view to extort praise. "When any one" (says Dr. Johnson) "complains of the want of what he is known to possess in an eminent degree, he waits with impatience to be contradicted."

Reproof is often given, not so much to mend the reproved, as to shew that the reprover is free from the faults himself.

Advice is often offered, rather to give the adviser the air of wisdom, than to benefit the advised.

Secrets, often times are divulged, more from the vanity of one's having been intrusted with them, than from any other motive.

As vanity—in different proportions, variously directed, mixed up with different elements, and displaying itself in different forms—is a universal quality or principle in mankind, so it belongs to our species exclusively perhaps. For we have no reason to think that, either above or below us, in the whole universe of God, there is any other race or order of creatures fully like to man in this respect.

Nor man, nor woman, is there, who hath not so much as a little *spice* of vanity, either in external conduct, or in the secret folds of the mind and heart. In a moderate degree, this marvellous quality of our species is not inconsistent with real and great moral excellence; but in the extreme, or when it is the *master-principle*, it is then, *that plague* of the heart, which taints all the springs of action. Neither is there any thing more carefully to be guarded against, and nipt in the bud, in

the course of early education. Because the extreme of vanity is of near kin to the extreme of avarice. The very vain person, like the very avaricious one, makes every thing centre in self, and will use as many low and vile tricks for applause, as does the other for wealth. Moreover vanity, like avarice, commonly increases with age, and, like that, the more plenteously it is fed, the more voracious groweth its appetite.

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## NUMBER LXIX.

### *Of the importance of the Goose, to Man.*

THERE is scarcely any thing that more often leads to incorrectness in point of truth, than an overweening fondness for pointed *Antithesis*, or the juggle of unnaturally contrasting words for the sake of their jingle, and of objects or things, to excite emotions of surprize. It is, moreover, a species of aberration to which the ambition for prettinesses of style is sadly prone, since antithesis has the effect of raising, in the bulk of mankind, a sort of admiration or wonder, which is so much the greater, by how much less is the real ground for the contrast, and greatest of all when there is not for it a shadow of ground.

It would cost no great labour and pains to illustrate these observations, by adducing various passages, or rather short sentences, both in verse and prose, from authors of celebrity. But a single example must suffice—

While Man exclaims, “ See all things for my use ! ”  
“ See Man for mine ! ” replies a pamper'd goose.

There is nothing perhaps in all that celebrated poem

of Pope, *The Essay on Man*, that has excited more pleasurable surprize, and in the minds of a greater number of readers, than this ingenious antithesis, or contrast of Man and Goose; and yet nothing can be more egregiously absurd than the sentiment it conveys.

*Man* made for the use of *geese*! A fig for this philosophy of Pope:—it was of the spurious mintage of his friend Bolingbroke. The goose, so far from needing man, is the happiest in the wild state. Possessing the privilege of an ample and potent wing, she can choose her clime and her food over the whole earth, and would be much more at her ease, if no human being existed. But *Man*, the liege lord of the lower creation, stands in urgent need of the goose. Nor is the designation of any inferior animal else, more clearly or more marvellously for his particular use and essential benefit. To say nothing of the luxury of her flesh, and of the superior luxury of her down, the *Quill* entitles the goose to rank amongst the very first of subsidies to human weal.

An Indian Sachem, when one offered him to take his son and learn him to write, contemptuously replied, “What good will it do a boy to learn to play with a feather?” Nor was that reply at all unreasonable in a savage, who preferred his own condition, and despised alike the employments and enjoyments of civilized life. But, in the bosom of civilization, and for the great purposes of promoting and extending civilization, a *Feather* is a potent instrument indeed. Not even the mere mechanical art of using a feather adroitly, is to be despised. Many a deep-learnt scholar has regretted, too late, that he had not learned, when a boy, to write a fair hand with ease and despatch, how much soever it might have intrenched upon some of his scholastic exercises of a higher order.

Whether we contemplate the diffusion of moral light, by the recent translations of the sacred volume into so many different tongues; whether we consider the spread of science and the arts, the communication of new inventions, or new improvements in the old ones; whether we reflect upon the infinitely multifarious business of commerce, of banks, and of common deal in its innumerable branches, or whether we turn our attention to the multitude of tomes and tracts, in verse and prose, that are calculated to make the world wiser and better:—these, and whatever there is else which relates to morals and government, to literature or science, to the pleasures of imagination, and to business of any and of every kind, proceed all from the goose quill. See this vast realm daily traversed by the mails, that fly in every direction, fraught with thousands and tens of thousands of letters,—some of business, some of friendship, some of love; see parent and child, husband and wife, lover and mistress, brothers and sisters, by means of the *speaking paper*, converse together freely, though hundreds of miles apart:—see all these proceeds of the *quill*, and believe, if you can, with the bard of Twickenham, that Man is no less made for the Goose, than the goose is for man.

And hark'e, gentlemen of the type: your press is not so independent quite, as ye fain would make the world believe. It is the *quill*, that feeds it, and gives it life and motion. Vain would be all your printing apparatus, without bountiful contributions from this wonder-working instrument. Not even Faust himself, a wizard though he was thought, could have been able to keep his press agoing without the pen.

Nay the letter-founder, the paper-maker, the bookseller, and all their dependants, draw their subsistence primarily from the quill of the grey goose; which, in so

far as it is under the guidance of intelligence, and consecrated to the cause of virtue, is one of the first of blessings to mankind. But, alas ! while human nature continues what it is, it will pervert its privileges, and turn its blessings to evils. The mischiefs resulting to individuals, and to society at large, from the *moral abuse* of the *Quill*, are neither few nor small. The pen of a ready, but unprincipled, writer, scatters abroad deadly poison with much more facility and effect, than it can be done by the most unbridled and licentious tongue.

I will conclude this little essay, which perhaps is rather of too light a cast, with an advisory remark of some considerable importance to new beginners in life. What I would here recommend, to youths generally, and of both sexes, is *Epistolary Writing*. It improves the understanding, as well as enlivens the social affections.—Of two females, perfectly equal when leaving their school at the age of fifteen, if one should almost entirely neglect her pen, and the other should frequently employ hers in well-chosen correspondencies ; the latter, at the age of thirty, other things being alike, would, from this single circumstance, have become considerably superior to the former, in point of understanding, and probably, too, in point of sensibility. Not to mention that very close friends, and very near relations, when long separated almost forget one another ; unless their friendship be kept in good plight by means of a frequent interchange of letters.—Nor should it be forgotten, that, to neglect to answer the letters of friends, is very little less uncivil, if any, than to neglect to answer them when they speak to you with their lips.

## NUMBER LXX.

*Of the rueful consequences of living too fast.*

FEW practical errors, of a secular nature, are of so innocent intention, and yet of so direful consequence, as that of **OVERLIVING**, for the special sake of making a figure. The men and women, who are first the subjects of this error, and then its victims, are not usually of the baser sort. So far from it; they are, for the more part, of liberal views, and generously animated with a desire of distinction. Ardently bent upon that object, and knowing that, in this strange world, nothing confers distinction so much as wealth, they assume, and strive hard to hold up, the semblance of wealth, though unfortunately destitute of the reality. And how can they do otherwise, without suffering the agonies of mortification? Endowed with keen sensibility, it touches them deep, that some of their neighbours, no better and perhaps scarcely richer than themselves, should make a better appearance, and of course attract more notice. How can they put their sons and their daughters, as well as wives, upon a footing with those who are fashionably called *good* families, unless they equal, or nearly approach them, in the expenses of the table and in personal habiliments?

This path, bordered on every side with precipices, is often gone into unawares at first. It is indiscretion mixed up with vanity, and that without a single particle of the corrupt leaven of intentional dishonesty. But though overliving, may, in its commencement, be owing to mere indiscretion combined with a seemingly harmless vanity, yet, in its progress, it becomes deserving of a far worse name. That is indeed a pernicious

and mortal error, by which one puts himself into circumstances which as it were compel him to commit new errors increasing in magnitude as fast as in number.

The error I have been describing would be not so direful, if it admitted of an easy cure; but though there is an obvious remedy, yet, in some cases, to apply it in season requires uncommon fortitude. Indeed in the single state, or even in the married state while the children of the family are in their infancy, it is not very difficult to retrench inordinate expenses; provided the *twain* happen to be *one*, as to opinion of the expediency of it:—a thing that might be as common perhaps as it now is rare, if husbands would only inform their wives, in good season, of the unprosperous condition of their worldly affairs. But through pride, false delicacy, or whatever motive else, wives are often held in ignorance of the true state of their family circumstances till the moment that ruin breaks upon them; and then are they upbraided by the world, of an extravagance which they had not run into but for the bandage upon their eyes.

In families where the children, and particularly the daughters, are grown up or nearly grown up, the impediments to a prudent retrenchment of expenses are multiplied. For though both father and mother see the absolute need of it, it is no easy matter to convince the youthy gentry, or to dispose them, if convinced, to sink, of their own free wills, from splendid young ladies, into plain, industrious, frugal girls. Their remonstrances, their intreaties, and especially their tears, it is hard to resist:—and so it happens that a great many continue steering toward the fatal gulf, though it be clearly in their view.

When a man is once resolved to keep up expensive appearances till he can hold out no longer, his moral

frame goes to wreck as fast as his circumstances. However honest, however trust-worthy he had been in his better days, he no longer possesses these estimable qualities, nor any just sense of honour. He casts about him for arts of shift and evasion. The perpetual duns at his door he tries to satisfy with fair promises, which he has no expectation or intention of performing. His heart becomes callous toward his creditors, and he grows quite regardless of their feelings, however deplorably they have to suffer by him. Like a drowning man, he catches at every thing. To gain a little respite, he will inveigle his near friend into surestship for him, and will drag his friend along with him to ruin.

Poor human nature is seldom proof against strong temptations *voluntarily* run into; and as seldom perhaps, in the instance under consideration, as in any other. Nor are there any who are fairly entitled to promise themselves beforehand, that their integrity can stem the moral whirlpool in which so many characters, once fair, have been overwhelmed.

An excellent rule has been laid down by the eminent moralist, Dr. Johnson; and it were to be wished that young men in particular would remember it, and make a practical use of it—at the outset of active life: the rule is this—“A man’s *voluntary* expenses should not exceed his income.” A huge mass of misery and mischief might be prevented, were it the general custom to adhere to this maxim as far as circumstances could admit.

Honest young householders, ye that are now beginning life together in the wedded state—guard with particular care against *the lust of the eye*. Of all our senses, that of eye-sight seems to have the nearest affinity with the heart, and the most often to lead it astray. The Philosophers of antiquity were so sensible of this,

that, to concentrate and rectify their ideas, one of them (*Democritus*) was said to put out his eyes, and another (*Pythagoras*) to shut himself up a whole winter in a subterraneous cave. Now, though fortunately for our age and country, these examples are as destitute of admirers as of followers ; yet the exercise of constant watchfulness over the eyes, was never, and nowhere, more needful : the common folly of large expenses where there is but small income, being committed, for the most part, rather to please the eye, than from any motive else—and not so much for the sake of the spender's eyes, as to attract the eyes of others.

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## NUMBER LXXI.

*Of banqueting upon borrowing.*

“ Be not made a beggar by banqueting upon borrowing, when thou hast nothing in thy purse.”

ECCLES. xviii. 38.

THE moral philosopher of old Jewry, who penned this admirable book, is *practical* in his observations, and at the same time, acute and discriminating. He dips not into the incomprehensible subtleties of abstract science, relative to the mysterious frame and texture of humanity, but describes the wonderful creature *Man*, such as he is shown to be by his actions, and adapts his moral and prudential cautions and precepts to man *as he is*—to his condition and conduct in real life.

Whether the sage had himself been taken in, by some of them, or from whatever cause, he hits off certain borrowers of his own time, with a peculiar keenness of description, in the passage that here follows.

“ Many, when a thing was lent them reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them. Till he hath received, he will kiss a man’s hand ; for his neighbour’s money he will speak submissively ; but when he should repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief, and complain of the time. If he prevail, he shall hardly receive the half, and shall count as if he had found it : if not, he hath deprived him of his money, and he hath gotten him an enemy without cause : he payeth him with cursings and railings ; and for honor he will pay him disgrace.”

The sage next proceeds to relate how the aforesaid conduct of some certain borrowers went to discourage all liberality in lending. “ Many therefore have refused to lend for other mens’ ill dealing, fearing to be defrauded.”\*

And here one might amuse himself not a little with comparing the past with the present—things relative to borrowing and lending, as they stood some thousand years ago, with what they are now-a-days, in this goodly country of ours.

But to proceed : our venerable author, is not as a cold-blooded satirist, who rather labours to excite the feeling of scorn and hatred, than of compassion. He gives, on the contrary, no countenance to covetous hoarding : much less to griping extortion. He saith not, “ Since things are so, it is best to trust nobody.” No. So far was this ungracious sentiment from the heart of the son of Sirach, he warmly inculcates a noble liberality, a disinterested benevolence. For, after having observed as above, that many refused to lend for other men’s ill dealing, fearing to be defrauded, he immediately adds, “ Yet have thou patience with a man in poor estate, and delay not to shew him mercy. Help the poor for the commandment’s sake, and turn him not away be-

cause of his poverty. *Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend, and let it not rust under a stone to be lost.*" Again, in the same chapter he says, "He that is merciful will lend unto his neighbour."—"Lend to thy neighbour in the time of his need." And elsewhere, he cautions against a churlishness of expression and manner in the act of giving, and, by parity of reason, in lending. "My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest." All which, is accompanied with this wholesome injunction to the other party. "Pay thou thy neighbour again in due season. Keep thy word, and deal faithfully with him, and thou shalt always find the thing that is necessary for thee."

Upon the whole, then, it may be fairly concluded that the precious book now under consideration—which indeed possesses every venerable attribute, with the exception of inspiration alone—is very far from altogether discouraging the neighbourly intercourse of borrowing and lending; seeing the scope of its lessons on this subject is to recommend moderation and scrupulous punctuality to the one class, and a humane and generous line of conduct to the other.

One may borrow occasionally, and be the better for it, and at the same time the lender suffers no injury or inconvenience: but to *banquet* upon borrowing, is a beggarly way of living. *If thou hast nothing in thy purse, replenish it, if possible, with thy own earnings, rather than by borrowing;* or if that be impossible for the present, yet be cautious against taking more than is needful, and ever be careful to pay it back in due time. For,—to repeat the admonition aforesaid,—"Pay thou thy neighbour again in due season. Keep thy word, and deal faithfully with him, and thou shalt always find the thing that is necessary for thee."

I intreat the reader's particular attention to the mat-

ter which I have just now rehearsed, since it comes from no ordinary authority, and is of superior excellence in itself. For the rest ; the few observations that will follow, must suffice.

In the simple old times of our author, borrowing for a premium, or on interest, was scarcely known. So that they who, in those days, *banqueted* on borrowing, must have done it, only in a small way, which bears no sort of comparison with the every day's experience of the present age. This thing has, with us, been carried to a wild extreme, utterly unknown to any former age, or in any other country ; and a frightful mass of wretchedness has been the natural consequence. But, passing this over, what remains is, to consider the subject of borrowing, on the small scale, and according to the most general acceptation of the word.

In this sense of the term, one who borrows, contracts a debt, with respect to which every principle of honesty and honour binds him to observe the utmost punctuality. For, the lender gives up the use of his property without fee or reward. All he demands or expects is, that the thing be returned in good condition, and punctually, according to promise. Wherefore, a loan is a sort of *sacred* debt ; and to delay payment,—much more never to pay, though there be no want of power, is returning evil for good, injury for kindness. Would that this vexatious frailty of character, were rare as it is common ! And, in order to a radical reform in this important particular, much attention must be paid to it in the early season of education. It is a great deal easier to form the young mind to correct habits, than to cure it of bad ones once contracted. For which reason, children should be carefully taught to mind their promises, and more especially to restore whatever they borrow, in good condition and by the

set time. Nor is it enough, merely to give them precepts upon this subject ; it must be worked into their practice, even from their earliest years.

In conclusion : there is one description of borrowers, who may fitly be termed *leeches* or *spongery*. These are persons, who, out of pure stinginess, are in the habit of borrowing of their neighbours the necessary implements of their daily business. They think it cheaper to borrow than to buy. But, generally, in the long run, they are losers by it themselves : and, the meanwhile, in this way, they are giving a deal of trouble to those about them, whose smothered resentments and inly scoldings, are neither few nor small.

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## NUMBER LXXII.

### *Of the principle of shame.*

No point is more clear, than that moral worth is superior to every thing else which bears the name of worth; that virtue in rags is more respectable than vice in brocade.

“ In the drama of life it is not to be considered who among actors is prince or who is beggar, but who acts prince or beggar best.” So taught Epictetus, a celebrated philosopher of ancient Greece : and Pope has versified him in the following couplet.

“ Honor and shame from no condition rise :  
Act well your part ; 'tis there true honor lies.”

All this is well said. That the point of honor lies, not so much in having a grand or a conspicuous part to act, but rather in acting well the part that providence allots us, is a position which admits of no dispute. But

*how true*

although it contradicts the theory of almost nobody, it is contrary to the practice of almost every body.

He that acts upon the stage of life a high part, will be courted, and he that acts a low part will be slighted; though the latter should very far excel the former in all that relates to the qualities of the heart. The man that comes in with the gold ring and in goodly apparel, is respectfully invited to sit here, in a good place; while the child of poverty, whose raiment is vile, is ordered to sit there, at the footstool; and *that*, without any regard to real merit or demerit. This is the fashion of the world; a fashion, which all do more or less follow.

It would in no wise be difficult to carry this train of thoughts to any reasonable length; since the subject is no less prolific, than evincive of the distempered condition of the world we live in. But all that I farther intend is, to remark, in few words, on *Shame*—understood not in the sense here given it by the poet, that is to say, as synonymous with dishonour or disgrace; but as denoting a certain kind of bosom-sensation, utterly undescribable, and yet most clearly distinguishable from every other feeling of the heart.

Shame then, meaning the *Sense* of Shame, is one of the powerful principles of our fallen nature, and, like our other natural principles, it does good or mischief according to the direction it takes. It operates most powerfully in the seasons of childhood and youth, and operates, on the whole, much more good than ill; for it is a preventive of indecency, and an incentive to laudable emulation. An over diffident youth, if properly encouraged, will exert himself to arrive to such attainments as shall give him confidence: but an over confident one, being full of himself, thinks he has attained enough already, and of course becomes remiss.

I believe it would be found upon a close inspection of mankind, in past ages as well as the present, that, of truly great and excellent characters, a very large proportion had felt the pains of diffidence, and displayed upon their cheeks the blush of shame, in their juvenile days.

The most virtuous do nothing to be ashamed of before men, and the most vicious are without shame. But between the utmost limits of human virtuousness on the one side, and viciousness on the other, there is a vast interval, which is filled up with mixed characters of both sorts ; and upon *them*, well directed shame has a great and a powerful influence.—“ Many who have not resolution enough to avoid a bad action, have yet feeling enough to be ashamed of it.” And that feeling of shame may prevent their repeating the misdeed : whereas, of an offender that is utterly shameless there is no hope.

Shame has a prodigious influence in enforcing the social laws of decency. Multitudes of people would not act so well as they do, if they were not ashamed to act worse. And it is better, at least for society, that they have the grace of shame, than no grace at all.

Vice loves the company of its like. And why ? It is, that it may keep itself in countenance, or escape the confusion of shame. Vice is conscious deformity, and vicious persons are enabled to hold up their heads in society, chiefly from the knowledge or supposal that numbers about them are deformed like themselves. Whereas if one stood quite alone in the practice of vice, and at the same time had the eyes of the good upon him, he would, unless desperately hardened, be ashamed of himself. Hence, a notoriously vicious person, living in a place where all the rest were virtuous, would be impelled as it were of very shame, either to

mend his ways, or to remove off to a more congenial society. In short, the benefits of shame are alike great, in number and in magnitude; so far forth, that it is questionable, whether, in the society of civilized man, there be not more persons who act decently from the sense or fear of shame, than from the impulse of a sound moral principle.

This matter was well understood by the sophists of the last age, who, in the war they waged against *Prejudice*, or rather in their nefarious efforts to banish from society, not only pure morals but even the common decencies of life; artfully directed their efforts particularly at the total extinction of the feeling of shame. And, for some time, their success corresponded to their zeal. It is a recorded fact, that, during the short-lived popularity of the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, a *blush* incurred a *penalty* at several of the boarding schools for young ladies in England.

Here two things are to be observed very carefully in the training of children.

1. Their natural sense of shame should not be put to trial too frequently, nor too severely. "Shame," says Mr. Locke, "is in children a delicate principle, which a bad management of them presently extinguishes. If you shame them for every trespass, and especially if you do it before company, you will make them shameless. Moreover, if you expose them to excessive shame for their greater faults, they will be very likely to loose all shame, and if once lost it is gone irrecoverably. By tampering with this feeling too often or with a rough hand, children the most susceptible of shame, may be made quite callous to its influence."

2. Children should be guarded betimes against *false shame*, which, in all its multifarious ramifications, and,

oftentimes, in the name, and under the disguise of *honour*, has done frightful mischiefs to our misjudging and deluded race.

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## NUMBER LXXIII.

*Of virtuous poverty.*

"Man needs but little here below,  
Nor needs that little long"—

AND yet to possess but little, though it be full enough for the real wants of nature, is deemed wretchedness. Poverty is, to many a delicate ear, one of the most frightful words in the whole vocabulary of our language : but it should be remembered that the word has several degrees of signification, and is really frightful in the extreme degree only.

True enough, the rags and filth, and the corresponding ignorance and depravity, so common in the abodes of squalid poverty, are objects of disgust and horror ; as they exhibit human nature in its utmost deformity, without aught to shade the picture. The lazy poor, the vicious and profligate poor, compose a mass of wretchedness that is frightful indeed, and not only frightful, but loathsome ; and but little pity can be felt for the suffering which they bring upon themselves by their idle and vicious habits.

This is not, however, simple poverty, but poverty and the grossness of vice in alliance ; and it is the latter that gives the former its hideous colouring. Virtuous poverty, on the other hand, however disrespected by a scornful world, is, in sober truth, respectable. It has a moral gracefulness that is peculiarly its own.

It is not in the splendour of wealth, or on the lap of ease, that Man, considered as a moral being, usually exhibits the finest features of character. For the highest order of virtues can be developed only in a condition of considerable hardship or suffering ;—namely, the virtues of fortitude, self-denial, patience, humility and quiet resignation. A family, that once had seen better days, struggling with misfortune, suffering “the rich man’s contumely,” and the neglect and scorn of former familiars, but suffering with fortitude and with pious resignation ; a family always poor and accustomed to endure hardship, but of pureness of morals, industrious, honest, unrepining, contented, daily offering up thanks to God for that little which it enjoys ; a Father, a Mother, oppressed with poverty, yet striving, with all the little means in their power, to school their children, and at the same time, both by precept and example, training them up, at home, in the way they should go :—these, to the moral ken, are among the most lovely spectacles that are ever exhibited in this fallen world. True, these humble virtues are like the flowers that “blush unseen.” They are scarcely noticed, and much less admired ; while thousands greet with admiration and applause, whatever of shining virtue the eye can descry in the ranks of wealth and grandeur.

The Rev. G. Crabbe, “the poet of reality, and of reality in low life,” has portrayed, with masterly powers of description, both vicious and virtuous poverty—not from fancy, but from what he saw and knew. If the images of depravity, in his poem, *The Borough*, be too coarse, too naked, and too hideous, to excite other emotions than those of disgust, the images of virtue, which, also, were taken from the deepest shades of poverty, possess almost unrivalled charms. The Tale, for

instance, of the *Sad Girl*, a poor maid of the Borough, who, after waiting a long time in anxious expectation of the return of the young sailor that had promised to marry her, at length received him emaciated and mortally sick, and nursed him day and night with the utmost tenderness till he breathed his last ; this tale, in point of heart-moving interest, perhaps has scarcely a rival in the history even of romance and fiction.

The following few lines of it show, how venerable, how sacred, how lovely, is the cottage of the poor when adorned with virtue and pure religion.

“ Still long she nurs'd him ; tender thoughts meantime  
Were interchang'd, and hopes and views sublime,  
To her he came to die, and every day  
She took some portion of the dread away ;  
With him she pray'd, to him his Bible read,  
Sooth'd the faint heart, and held the aching head :  
She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer ;  
Apart she sigh'd ; alone, she shed the tear ;  
Then, as if breaking from a cloud, she gave  
Fresh light, and gilt the prospect of the grave.”

Blessed indeed are such poor ! and of such, the number is, in all probability, far greater than is generally imagined : the virtuous deeds and heavenly dispositions of the obscure children of poverty being very little known or noticed, save by the Omniscient Eye.

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#### NUMBER LXXIV.

##### *Of frivolity of character.*

THERE are, of both sexes, a number of volatile persons, who bear a near resemblance to the little play-some birds that skip perpetually from bush to bush.--- Their attention is never fixed ; their thoughts run upon every thing by turns, and stay upon nothing long. In

conversation they are unsettled and flighty ; when they read, “ they gallop through a book like a child looking for pictures.”

Characters of this sort abound in the upper regions of life, among those who had been badly educated, and have nothing to do ; and, by a celebrated writer, they are admirably hit off in the following pictorial sketch of *Vetusta*.

“ She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day ; again to change the colour of her clothes, again to have a new head, and again to put patches on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the play-house, and who sings finest at the opera. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily and politely about nothing. She is again to be delighted with some new fashion, and again angry at the change of some old one. She is again to be at cards and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased at her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth-night, and again to see the town full of company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town ; again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notices of marriages, quarrels, and partings.”

Such is the description of an elderly fashionable lady, of the London stamp ; a description, which, under the fictitious name of a single individual, was meant to embrace a large class.

Nor is it only in the regions of fashion and high-life, that frivolity of character is seen ; though, *there*, it has the strongest stimulants and the most ample means of displaying itself. Fortunate are they, on whom is imposed the salutary necessity of doing something valua-

ble with their existence ; whose daily occupations, as well as worldly circumstances, withhold them from an imitation of those called the great, but, who, by their frivolous pursuits, render themselves least among the little.

A flighty, frivolous turn of mind, is owing partly to nature, partly to education, and partly to habit.

Every body that is observant, must have seen that some children are more sedate, and others more volatile ; and that the latter, during their infantile years, are peculiarly pleasing for their pert vivacity. They perform childish things in the most engaging manner. And not in childhood only do they gratify and please ; in the following stage of early youth there is a charm in the vivaciousness of their temper, which we are apt to mistake for the germin of genius. But the expectation is often disappointed at the period of mature age. There is then found a gay surface, but no depth ; a high-fed fancy, but a lank understanding and feeble judgment. The Man, even the *aged* Man, is still as volatile, still as fond of little sports and of little things, still as boyish, as when he was a boy.

The fruit of age is generally corresponding to the education of childhood. Education goes far, very far, in determining and fixing characters ; and of none more than of young minds remarkably vivacious. Though a more than ordinary degree of vivacity, in the early years of life, affords no sure promise of superior strength of understanding, so neither is it to be interpreted on the other hand, as a sign that the understanding will be weak ; for it sometimes is an accompaniment of great and shining parts. But in either case, the management of children of this description is a matter of peculiar delicacy. If prudent care be taken to curb and regulate, without extinguishing, the vivacity of their

tempers ; if their attention be directed betimes to things most important and serious ; if the solid parts of education be well wrought into their minds :—in such cases, although at last they should turn out to be but merely of middling abilities, yet they would stand a fair chance of being not only useful, but peculiarly agreeable, members of community. Contrariwise, if their education be conducted, as too often it happens, in a manner calculated to nourish and confirm the volatile bias of their nature, there will be very little hope of their future respectability or usefulness. For, should they have talents never so bright, the chances are ten to one that they will misemploy them. Or, on the other hand, if their understandings prove but slender, they will be always children, in manners and behaviour ;—pert, lively, frolicksome children, with hoary heads, and spectacles on the nose.

“ Habit is second nature.” Especially, when habit is superadded to the strong bias of nature, it is the hardest thing in the world to overcome it. And thus it happens that children of more than common liveliness of temper, so seldom learn to “put away childish things,” when they come to be full grown men and women. Permitted to spend their early days in little else but trifles, the habit of trifling becomes firmly rooted, and triflers they continue to be throughout the whole of their lives. The same volatileness, which made them so pleasing in their childhood, renders them shiftless, worthless, and of small repute, ever after.

## NUMBER LXXV.

*Of the natural and the moral heart.*

“Thine own things, and such as are grown up with thee, thou canst not know.”

To obtain conviction of the truth of this observation of Esdras the Jewish Sage, we need look only to that part of our own system called the Heart. Both the *material* and the *moral* heart of man are of mysterious and wonderful construction ; too deep to be fathomed by the line of philosophy, and too intricate to be explored by human ken.

In regard to the *material* heart, as stated in Keil’s Anatomy, “each ventricle of the heart will at least contain one ounce of blood. The heart contracts four thousand times in one hour : from which it follows, that there passes through the heart, every hour, four thousand ounces, or three hundred and fifty pounds of blood. Now the whole mass of blood (in a common-sized human body) is said to be about twenty-five pounds ; so that a quantity of blood equal to the whole mass of blood passes through the heart fourteen times in one hour ; which is about once in every four minutes.”

Dr. Paley, upon this stupendous subject, says, “The heart is so complex in its mechanism, so delicate in many of its parts, as seemingly to be little durable, and always liable to derangement : yet shall this wonderful machine go, night and day, for eighty years together, at the rate of a hundred thousand strokes every twenty-four hours, having, at every stroke, a great resistance to overcome ; and shall continue this action this length of time, without disorder, and without weariness.”

It is a fact worthy of notice, that in this wonderful piece of mechanism there is as it were the power of repelling the meddlesome eye of curiosity ; since, whilst we are in sound health, the mighty labour that is perpetually going on in the little laboratory within gives us no sort of disquietude, so long as we pay no close attention to the process ; but no sooner does one contemplate it with close and undivided attention, than unpleasant and almost insupportable sensations check his impertinent inquisitiveness. Perhaps no one living would be able to fix his whole mind, for the space of a single minute, upon the pulsations of his own heart without experiencing sensations of undescribable uneasiness.

All this is wonderful—“ *A mighty maze, but not without a plan.*”—Who that takes a sober view of the mechanism of his own heart, can say, in that *very* heart, *There is no God !*

Nor is the *moral* heart of man less wonderful. It is remarkable that this too, as well as the material or natural heart, is repulsive to careful and strict scrutiny. It is one of the most difficult of performances for one to scrutinize the moral frame and operations of one’s own heart with a steadfast and impartial eye ; the difficulty principally consisting in a violent aversion to that kind of scrutiny and the irksomeness of the process. And hence it is, that a great many persons know less of their own hearts, considered in a moral point of view, than of any thing else with which they are in a considerable degree conversant. Partial as we always are to our own understandings and our intellectual powers in general, we judge of them with a great deal more uprightness and truth, than we do of our hearts. The defects of the former we perceive, and own ; but those of the latter we conceal as much as possible, not only

from others, but from ourselves ; and are mightily offended when the finger even of a friend points them out to us.

As the heart is the source of the affections and the volitions, so it is the seat of all real beauty and of all real deformity belonging to man or woman. By its qualities, and by no standard else, is the worth or the vileness of every human character to be determined. No splendor of talent, no brilliancy of action even on virtue's side, can countervail the want of rightness of heart. Hence, whilst we are bound to judge others to be virtuous, in so far as they appear, from the tenor of their overt acts ; we must look deeper, far deeper, in forming a judgment upon ourselves.

In choosing a wife, a husband, or any familiar and bosom friend, the very first consideration is to be had to the qualities of the heart ; for if those be vile, no intellectual excellence can give promise of good. A man, or a woman, either bad-hearted or *heartless*, however gifted with intellect or furnished with accomplishments, is not one that will brighten the chain of friendship, or smooth the path of life.

The heart that gravitates the wrong way, draws the understanding along with it ; blinding, perverting, and duping that noble faculty ; so that it judges of the thing, not according to what it really is, but according to the feeling and inclination of its treacherous adviser. This makes it so difficult for one to determine right in one's own cause.

It is no less melancholy than true, that, in general, we take infinitely less pains to improve our hearts than to improve our understandings. Yet no point is clearer, than that the improvement of the intellectual faculties can turn to no good account, without a corresponding improvement of the moral faculties.

Again, in educating children, the least degree of pains is usually taken with their hearts. It is not their *moral* education that is so much attended to : the body and the mind are too generally made the chief subjects of tuition, and not the heart, the temper, the moral frame. The vast superiority of the christian morality over the best part of the morality of the wisest pagans, consists very materially in this, that the former embraces the views, motives and feelings of the heart, whereas the latter regards the outward act only. Socrates taught some things excellent in themselves, but his system reached only the surface of morality. It was for the Divine Teacher alone, to inculcate moral duties upon true principles, by prescribing the cleansing of the fountain, as not only the best and the shortest, but as the only way to purify the streams.

A word on *sensibility*. No quality, especially in female character, is so much praised, admired, and loved ; and, for that reason, no quality is so often counterfeited. And what is it ? Not the susceptible temperament, which feels only for self or for one's own—Not that sickly sensibility, which so enervates the mind that it yields to even the lightest wind of adversity—Not that mock-sensibility, which weeps over a fictitious tale of woe, but has no sympathy for the real woes of life. No. These, and various others that might be named, are of the spurious brood. Genuine sensibility—that sensibility which is indeed so estimable and lovely—is a *moral* quality ; of which it would be difficult to find a better definition than is given in the following admirable lines of the poet Gray.

“ Teach me to love and to forgive ;  
Exact my own defects to scan ;  
What others are to feel ; and know myself a man.”

## NUMBER LXXVI.

*Of an interesting trial of old, before the royal court of Persia.*

Few questions have been agitated more frequently or with more spirit, than that of the balance of power between the two sexes: a question that had occupied the attention of mankind long before the political balance between the powers in Europe was so much as thought of. In Asia indeed, from its earliest history, the rights of women, generally speaking, have been much less respected than in Europe, and the goodly country where we ourselves draw the breath of life; yet even in Asia, it was of old contended that the balance of power leaned rather toward the female side.

Three young men belonging to the body guard of King Darius, who reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and twenty and seven provinces, wrote, each, his sentence, which they delivered to the king. Of the last of the three, the sentence was, *Women are strongest*:—which position the noble youth vindicated before all the princes of Persia, in the following strain of eloquence.

“ O ye men, it is not the great king, nor the multitude of men, neither is it wine that excelleth: who is it then that ruleth them, or hath the lordship over them? Are they not women? Women have borne the king, and all the people that bear rule by sea and land.—Even of them came they; and they nourished them up that planted the vineyards from whence the wine cometh. These also make garments for men; these bring glory unto men; and without women, men cannot be. Yea, and if men have gathered together gold and sil-

ver, or any other goodly thing, do they not love a woman which is comely in favour and beauty? And letting all these things go, do they not gape, and even with open mouth fix their eyes fast upon her; and have not all men more desire unto her, than unto silver or gold, or any goodly thing whatsoever? A man leaveth his own father that brought him up, and his own country, and cleaveth unto his wife. He sticketh not to spend his life with his wife, and remembereth neither father, nor mother, nor country. By this also, ye must know that women have dominion over you. Do ye not labour and toil, and bring all to the woman?"

After the young orator had pursued this strain to a still further length, he turns himself particularly, as it would seem, to the terrible monarch, and tells him to his face that his power is in no wise comparable to that of woman.

" And now," says he " do ye not believe me? Is not the king great in his power? Do not all regions fear to touch him? Yet did I see him and Apame—the daughter of the admirable Bartacus, sitting at the right hand of the king, and taking the crown from the king's head, and setting it upon her own head: she also struck the king with her left hand: and yet for all this, the king gaped and gazed upon her with open mouth: if she laughed upon him, he laughed also: but if she took any displeasure at him, the king was fain to flatter, that she might be reconciled to him again. O ye men, how can it be but that women should be strong, seeing they do this?"\*

The sequel was, that " the king and the princes, looked upon one another"—no doubt with such leering glances as betrayed their full conviction that what had been spoken was but too true.

\* The 4th chapter of the 1st apochryphal book of Esdras:

But though the gallant young advocate of the superior strength of women had manifestly gained the field, still the palm of victory was not openly awarded him till after he had declared himself upon the power of TRUTH ;—and then, the whole assembly gave a shout of approbation and applause.

Wherefore, seeing the question was not expressly and fully decided in the Persian court, and that it still is open to remark and discussion, I will venture to hazard a few thoughts upon it.

Granting then, what hardly admits of doubt, that, in the comparative view of the sexes, women *are* strongest—it is but fair to state, on the other side, that they seldom seem to know exactly where, and in what, their great strength lies; and for this reason it is, that they so often meet with sore discomfitures and defeats. When woman contests it with man in his own rough way, there are more than ten chances to one against her. In playing the man she is no match for man. Her masculine air and manner, move only his laughter and contempt. Instead of taking fright at her violent vociferations, her menaces, and the glare of rage in her visage, nothing, except love and esteem, is further from his heart than fear. She renders herself no less impotent than disgusting; unless she happen to be yoked with one possessing neither nerve nor bone—in which case, such a victory over such a husband could afford her but a worthless triumph at best.

The legitimate strength of woman lies quite the other way. Almost ever it exerts itself to the best advantage on the *heart* and *will* of man, or in gently taking his *mind* prisoner, rather than in stout attempts at subduing his physical powers. Woman is strong in proportion to her seeming weakness. In willingly and cheerfully yielding to man his due prerogatives, she

takes the readiest way of ensuring her own. By leaning on his arm she makes that arm hers, and nerves it for her own support and defence. It is her fidelity, her modesty, her sweetness, her soft persuasive force, both in word and deed, which render woman invincible, and invest her with a kind of paramount power.

Nor is this a thing of art, or of cunning contrivance : so far otherwise, even the least appearance of art would addle the whole compound. It is only to act the woman naturally : it is only to act the well-instructed, well-principled woman, in a manner truly consonant to the peculiar station and distinct qualities of her sex.

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## NUMBER LXXVII.

### *Of moral Education.*

FEW subjects have employed a greater number of tongues and pens than that of Education, and yet, few subjects are so generally misunderstood. Most admit the importance of education, and are forward to laud it, though perhaps scarcely one in twenty is sensible of the full meaning of the term.

Education in the common or popular acceptation, is made to mean mere learning. So that when people talk of education, they generally understand by it little or nothing else than teaching children reading, writing, orthography, grammar, arithmetic, and so on ; and when they have got these, and whatever else of learning that is taught in the schools, they are accounted *well educated*, and it is thought to be altogether their own fault if they fail to act well their part in the

journey of life. Often it is said that such and such youths have an excellent education, when nothing farther is intended by it than their having been accurately taught in the rudiments of what is called learning.

But, that learning is not the whole of education, nor even the most essential part of it, is a truth evinced by the divine testimony concerning Abraham, which here follows :—“ I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to do justice and judgment.”

Abraham, one of the greatest and best of the race of Adam, was, peradventure, of all men the most careful to train up his children in the way they should go ; and his unequalled care in that respect, was the means of entailing distinguishing blessings upon his posterity. Yet, till several ages and centuries after Abraham’s day, nothing which we call learning had existence in the world. There were no writers nor readers : not even the letters of the alphabet were known by any body living.

What has been said above, is by no means meant to depreciate learning, which is to be regarded as one of the choicest of human blessings ; far more to be valued than treasures of gold and silver. Indeed we can hardly be sufficiently thankful that we live in an age so far exceeding all former times, in the facility of the means of imparting learning to the rising generation, and for zealous co-operations to diffuse it among all classes of society. A happy prospect will this open, provided the means be directed to the right end. Otherwise, giving children learning, makes them wise but to do evil ; for the increase of faculty effected by learning, will be turned to good or ill, to benefit or mischief, according to the direction it receives in the early years of life.

Now, as learning only supplies ability, the great thing is, to turn that ability to good account ; to prevent its running into mischief, and to incline it toward things that are excellent. For what though one had all the learning of the schools ? So much the worse would it be for himself and for society, if his inclination led him to make a vile use of it. Though a man have all knowledge, if he have not sound moral principle with it, he is the more dangerous and pestilent, in proportion to his superior advantages and faculties.

Every day's experience gives proof of this. The fraternity of forgers, swindlers, and cheats, so numerous and formidable at the present instant, consists, for the most part, of men of good education, as far as mere learning is to be regarded. Of *that* they have more than an equal share. But their early moral education having been neglected, their learning is a curse to themselves and to all about them. Who would not chuse his son should rather never learn to write, than be tempted and led by means of his adroitness in penmanship, to the commission of felonious deeds that would fix him in "durance vile" for years or for life ? And who can reasonably expect that the learning given his children will not be abused to their own shame and to the shame of their kindred, unless he takes at least as much pains to shape aright their moral frame, as in schooling them ?

Moral education, without which there is nothing of literature or of science but is liable to be perverted to the worst purposes, is to be begun from the cradle. The first step is to teach the infantile subject implicit obedience to parental authority ; and then, to rule with such moderation and sweetness, that it shall entirely trust and love the hand that guides it. In this way, the good impressions made upon the young mind, are

likely to be indelible, and there is ground to hope that the moral and religious instructions you instil, will sink deep in the heart. Nor is it precept alone that will suffice. Though "precept upon precept" be given children, and their memories be stored never so well with moral and religious lore of the purest kind, it will be of little avail except a corresponding example be daily presented before their eyes.

"It is well known to the students in ornithology, that the younglings of singing birds listen to the old ones, and carefully learn their notes." And this propensity to imitation, is no less obvious in children. Like those little birds, or rather like little apes, they are prone to mimic whatever is done or said in their presence, and especially the ways and manners of their parents and instructors. So that the example set before them by those who have the care of their education, together with that of their young companions, has, of all human means, perhaps, the greatest influence in forming and fixing their characters for life.

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### NUMBER LXXVIII.

*Of the power of the Imagination over young minds—  
instanced in George Hopewell.*

"The man that once did sell the lion's skin  
While the beast liv'd, was kill'd with hunting him."  
SHAKESPEARE.

In younger life especially, the imagination often runs away with the judgment. A young man gifted with a warm imagination, but whose judgment is immature for want of experience, views things through a deceptive perspective. His throbbing head teems with flat-

tering visions. Every thing that *may* turn to his own favour, he takes for granted, and every untoward incident, on the contrary, that may chance to thwart and disappoint him, he leaves out of his calculations. A bold adventurer in the lottery of life, he feels quite sure of drawing a prize ; and his too great confidence is the very means of turning him up a blank. For, as on the one hand, it prevents that care and circumspection in business which is necessary to success, so, on the other, it leads him to square his expenses not to his real circumstances, but to his visionary prospects.

George Hopewell, a goodly youth, took in a decent cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, but forgot to take with him a single idea of meeting with adverse winds and with misadventures. He was neither a simpleton nor an ignoramus. An honest heart had he, and a brain rather fertile than barren. He was weak in one particular only :—he was inclined to believe every thing that he found written in *the Chronicles of the Imagination*. In short, none was more skilful in building aerial castles ; an art, which, though it always gives pleasure to the artist, very seldom brings him any profit.

Thus equipped with mental stores, and furnished also with some cash, Hopewell begins business. He begins on a large scale, and naturally enough ; for who, with a warm and pregnant imagination, could bear to be occupied with small things ? His great stock in trade, the most of which, by far, he had taken on credit, he now views with rapture.—“ All this is worth — and its profits from the first turn, will increase it to the sum of —. Well, I can turn it seven times in seven years, and shall then be worth full thirty thousand dollars clear to myself.”\*—Hopewell, so rich in prospective funds,

\* Most readers may recollect a paragraph in one of the papers of the British Spectator, very like to this.

feels as if he had this wealth all in hand, and comes quite up to the reasonable expenses of a man already worth thirty thousand dollars.

A worm may penetrate and sink a ship, as effectually as the ball of a cannon.—*Hopewell* met with no uncommon gust of adversity. Nothing did he lose by fire and water, and not much by bad debts ; yet his circumstances grew more and more narrow year by year, till, in less than seven years, he became insolvent to a considerable amount. All this was owing, or principally owing, to one single circumstance—living upon prospects, his outgoes constantly exceeded his incomes. If, instead of being led away by the deceiving slut *Imagination*, he had all along conformed his management and the expenses of his living to his real circumstances, he might have had, if not wealth, at least competence.—Many a promising and fine young man has been upset, by carrying more sail than his bark and his ballast could bear.

And here permit me to offer a serious caution against running rashly and deeply in debt—a ruinous imprudence, to which all the numerous, and, in some respects, respectable, family of the *Hopewells*, are exceedingly prone.

It is no new remark, and yet not the worse for wear, that multitudes are undone as to their worldly affairs by viewing things at a distance.

It is thus the inconsiderate and sanguine deceive themselves when they contract heavy debts. Viewing the thing at a distance—at a distance of time—they view it in a false mirror.

In the days of our youth, and, as to many of us, even up to the days of our old age, we are apt to feel as if we should be mighty able to pay a debt six months or a twelvemonth hence. *Imagination* furnishes us with

ways and means in abundance for aftertimes, though we have none for the present. Only give us a long pay day, and we can do this, or we can do that. But the wheel of time presently brings round the six months, or the twelvemonth, or the yet longer period. It vanishes like a dream : and the debtor, failing in his calculations, if he calculated at all, is quite as unable to pay as he was at the instant the contract was made. He is now in the hands of his creditor, who can sponge him, or ruin him, as he pleases.

I am not speaking of what *might* be, but of what *has* been in innumerable instances. The circumstances of the late times were such as to excite in the minds of a great portion of the people confident hopes of extraordinary profit and gain, and, meanwhile, credit was attainable more easily and in greater extent, than ever perhaps had been witnessed at any other period or in any other country. Corresponding with this state of things, there has been a general rashness of courage as respects plunging headlong into debt ; and the direful consequences are now seen and felt in all parts of the general community.—For what is past there is no help ; but the ills of past experience should teach us prudence for the time to come.

Running in debt is a serious business, which, if proper caution be wanting, jeopardises not only property, but character also, and personal freedom. Of those who have been adventurous and rash in this respect, how many have been utterly ruined in estate ? How many have lost their credit and reputation ? How many have forfeited the character for truth and integrity, to which they once had been fairly entitled ? How many, prompted by the violent temptations arising out of their embarrassed circumstances, have acted in a manner astonishing to all who knew them in their better days ?

Credit, so invaluable to all who are in any reputable

kind of business, and especially to those who have little else to depend upon, is of a delicate and frail nature : it must be used with moderation, or it languishes and dies. A man disposed at all times to extend his credit as far as he possibly can, or to take up all the credit he can get, has many chances to one, of being a bankrupt in credit as well as in circumstances.

A word to spirited young men ; a word that will apply fully as well to a great many who are *not* young. If credit, long credit be offered you—pause awhile ere ye swallow the bait. Calculate the thing on all sides, and in all its bearings—its *mischances*, as well as its chances.—Credit, long credit, with interest, *With interest!* “There’s the rub.” This same interest is a devourer : it eats like a canker.

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## NUMBER LXXIX.

*Of the foul nature and direful effects of customary gaming.*

THE Play at Cards, which at the first was used for mere amusement,\* no sooner was adopted by avarice than it turned to be *Gaming* ;—and, through this transmutation of its nature as well as name, it has proved one of the greatest scourges of community, every where, in all the four quarters of the world.

Avarice is a mother-sin, of whose numerous brood *Gaming* is the most haggard and wretched ; for however abundant be its prey, it never thrives. It devours innumerable fatlings, and yet remains ever lean

\* The invention of Cards is said to have been for the purpose of diverting the mind of a certain melancholic king of France.

itself. There is a curse upon its basket and store ; a curse that blights its gains, and turns its enjoyments to wormwood and gall. Neither is this to be wondered at, when we consider the objects of gaming : the principles of the art ; and the certain and necessary consequences of the practice or habit.

The main object of the gamester, is to acquire wealth by plunder ; utterly regardless of the age, or sex, or circumstances, of any who fall into his toils. For it makes no difference whether the victim be a stranger or a familiar acquaintance, a man of age and experience or a stripling, an alien from his blood or his own mother's son.

Gamesters by profession, are a migratory tribe, as strongly marked with peculiarities, as the Gypsies. They have a jargon that is all their own ; a jargon, which, interlarded with oaths and blasphemies, is in common use at their board. Also, they have a kind of police belonging exclusively to themselves. Other men form themselves into distinct bodies, for valuable and noble purposes ; some for the improvement of the individual members ; some for the furtherance of the arts and sciences ; and some for the promotion of the holy cause of Religion and Morality, and particularly of Charity : and all these have by-laws and regulations corresponding to the worthiness of the ends in view. So, also, Gamesters have a code of laws—the laws of the table—perfectly corresponding, in the main, to the base ends they drive at.

But it may be said, and indeed it has been said, that the laws of the gaming room prohibit *foul play*, under the penalty of expulsion ; that a considerable portion of gamesters are men of rank, and of a delicate sense of honour—men who would sooner lose their hearts' blood than trespass upon the rules of the game. Be it

20. The question then arises, What is *foul play*?—Its meaning, I believe, is pretty much confined to direct fraud, or downright cheating in the management of the cards. This touches the honour, and the *moral sense*, forsooth, of gamesters; so that the delinquent, if his fraud be manifest, falls under the general reprobation, and is no longer considered as fit for the company of gentlemen. On the other hand, what is *fair play*? Assuredly, it has a marvellous latitude of meaning. For according to the casuistry of even the most upright and honorable gamesters, “Every advantage may be legitimately taken of the young, the unwary, and the inebriated, which superior coolness, skill, address, and activity can supply.” Yes, the gamester may inveigle the unwary youth to the table, and artfully lead him on, step by step, till he has stripped him of his whole patrimony; or he may secretly help to intoxicate a fellow-player, and, taking advantage of his inebriation, instantly plunge him into a condition of wretchedness and ruin—he may do all this, and much more, and yet be considered as a fair gamester, a gentleman of honour!

The dreadful consequences of gaming are too numerous to be told in a short essay, and some of them are too obvious to need it. I touch not upon the most awful part of the subject—the hopeless death of the unrepenting gamester, and the peculiar terribleness of his audit. Nor will the narrow limits I have prescribed to myself permit me to detail the deplorable consequences that this practice brings after it upon society at large. I will only mention, therefore, some instances of the harm which gamesters inevitably bring upon themselves in the present life: meaning this for the special benefit of those, who are but in the threshold of the practice.

“Every amiable propensity in the heart of man, every endearing tie, every sacred pledge, every honorable feeling, are set aside and forgotten when gaming takes possession of the human mind.” This is not said at random; it is the voice of truth and experience, and has been exemplified in innumerable instances. And yet the danger is neither seen nor apprehended, by the young beginner. Many a youth of fair promise enters upon the career of gaming, more out of thoughtlessness than viciousness. Not aware of the fraud with which the system is implicated, nor of the train of bad propensities that necessarily enter into the composition of a gamester, he steps into the fatal path without intention of pursuing it far, and without fear of being lost in its labyrinths. But presently the leprosy seizes him, and the plague of it overspreads his whole mind and heart. His love of gaming increases, alike, whether he gains or loses. It fixes, and as it were fascinates, his whole attention; so that every thing else is neglected. The company he keeps, the language he hears, the scenes of depredation he daily witnesses, poison, within him, the source of moral feeling. The jealousy, the rage, the revenge, incidental to the employ in which he is engaged, generate a ferocity of temper. He is lost to all that is good, and prepared for every evil. He that, by habits of industry, might have been of competent wealth; he that might have been the source of joy and felicity to an amiable wife, and the father of a progeny that would have blessed his memory; he that might have been an ornament to society and an honor to the family of man,—is, at last, a vagabond—as destitute of property as of principle—the grief and shame of his kindred—despised of the world, and a burden to himself.

## NUMBER LXXX.

*Of the almost insuperable power of Habit.*

THE Brazilians, had been so long and so generally inured to the abominable practice of eating human flesh, that the Christian Missionaries found it less difficult to reform them of any other of their evil practices than of this. The chief joy of those savages was in their cannibal feasts ; the women and the children, as well as the men, partaking of them with equal delight ; insomuch that nothing was harder of cure than this unnatural appetite.

Mr. Southey, in his history of Brazil, relates a story of the following tenor. No very long time after the Portuguese had obtained possession of Brazil, a Jesuit undertook to christianize a Brazilian woman of great age. He catechized her, he instructed her, as he conceived, in the nature of christianity ; and finding her at the point of death, he began to enquire whether there was any kind of food which she could take.—“ Grandam,” said he (that being the word of courtesy by which it was usual to address old women) “ if I were to get you a little sugar now, or a mouthful of some of our nice things which we get from beyond the sea, do you think you could eat it ? ”—“ Ah, my grandson,” replied the old woman, “ my stomach goes against every thing. There is but ~~one~~ thing which I think I could touch. *If I had the little hand of a little tapua boy, I think I could pick the little bones ;—but woe is me, there is no one to go out and shoot one for me !* ”

As this extraordinary morsel of history, corroborates an observation not unfrequently made, that, with some of the pagans amongst whom christian missionaries have

laboured, cannibalism has been found the most incurable of any of their vices ; at the same time it strikingly exemplifies, generally, the almost incurable nature of inveterate vicious habits. It is a counterpart to that portion of inspiration which represents it as extremely difficult, and next to impossible, for one that is accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well.

It is a proverbial saying, that habit is second nature ; meaning, I conceive, that whatever of taste, appetite, inclination, or affection, we acquire by habit, it becomes as natural to us as if it were born with us. This is a thing obvious to general experience and observation.—But there is one other thing near akin to it, which, though not quite so obvious, is perhaps equally true. It is this : the *second* nature that has grown out of evil habits cleaves to us, in some degree, as long as we live, and that notwithstanding principles of real piety at heart.

It is freely admitted that the Grandam, whose strange story has just been rehearsed, was merely a nominal christian, and but very imperfectly instructed in even the doctrinal knowledge of our holy religion. But suppose the reverse of this ; suppose she had become a christian indeed : What then ? No doubt she would have abhorred the idea of shooting a tapua boy, that she might pick the little bones of his little hand. No doubt she would have abhorred cannibalism as a monstrous crime : but it is not quite so certain that her *appetite* would at all times have been entirely free from hankерings after the unnatural food to which she had been so long accustomed, and which, of all things, was the most delicious to her taste.

The truth is, any one who contracts bad habits, admits into his garrison inveterate and restless foes, which he can never entirely expel. Sometimes he may

seem to get a complete mastery of them, when, of a sudden, they muster anew their rebellious forces and quite overpower him. Or even though, by the force of moral and religious principle, along with ever-wakeful vigilance, he keep under these foes, yet they give him incessant alarm, inquietude and vexation. They are the torment of his life, and embitter his last moments. In many a virtuous bosom there is a hard struggle, between principle and propensity ; between a deep sense of duty, morality and religion, and the violence of appetites and passions that had been nourished by habit till they were grown up to gigantic strength. A struggle, in which, though virtue gain the victory, it is gained at the expense of pains which are neither few nor small—of pains, comparable to those occasioned by cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye. So true is it, that vicious habits are either our ruin and destruction, or, at the best, they will be a plague to us, however much we may wish and strive to uproot them utterly from our minds and hearts.

It was with reference to the almost invincible force of habit, that the wise man penned the aphorism so worthy to be put in letters of gold, and hung up in the mansion of every rising family :—“ Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Upon the same principle of the power of habit, if, reversing the aphorism, you train up your child in the way he should *not* go ; if you countenance his faults ; if you encourage, rather than check his vices, there are many chances to one, that shame and ruin will be his portion. But though this is clearly the voice of truth and experience, yet many infatuated parents lull themselves in the expectation that the faults of their children will be cured by time : a notion no less fatal than it is false. Indeed, time may perchance cor-

rect the errors of inexperience, or the mere follies of childhood and immature youth ; but not immoralities—not real viciousness of disposition and action—not falsehood, fraud, profaneness, profligacy, or any real vice that can be named. Diseases of the mind, like those of the body, usually become the more inveterate by time. Time ripens the inceptive faultiness into habit ; and time again strengthens and confirms the incipient habit. Every day adds somewhat to its strength ; every new indulgence gives it a firmer root ; and it incorporates itself at last with the very fibres of the heart.

See the knurly oak, which no arm of flesh can bend, which nothing but the bolt of heaven can rive :—this same oak was once a pliant twig.

Guard, then, with utmost care,—let parents guard their children, and let all those of the young who have come to years of discretion guard themselves,—against the inceptive ingress of any and every vicious habit :—for—

“ — When the fox has once got in his nose,  
He soon finds means to make his body enter.”\*

\* SHAKESPEARE.

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## NUMBER LXXXI.

*Of the World.*

Two English poets, of eminent but very unequal genius, are diametrically in opposition to one another in their descriptions of the same great object—*The World*.

The following lines of Milton give only the bright side of the picture.

“ Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth  
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand ;  
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,  
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,  
But all to please and sate the curious taste  
And give unbounded pleasure unto man ?”

On the contrary, the disappointed Dr. Young, contemplating the World through the spleen and gloom of his own humour, describes it as an abode altogether dismal.

“ A part, how small, of this terraqueous globe  
Is tenanted by man ! the rest a waste,  
Rocks, deserts, frozen seas, and burning sands,  
Wild haunts of monsters, poisons, stings and death !  
Such is earth’s melancholy map !”

A melancholy map indeed ; but, thank God, not the true one.

There are some who seem to make it a point of conscience to speak disparagingly of the world they live in, as if they thought it were honouring the Maker to despise his workmanship. True enough, it is an *evil* world ; and why ? It is not so of itself, but by reason of the evilness of the race of moral beings that inhabit it. It is the *moral*, rather than the *natural* map of the world, that is unamiable and hideous.

The original frame of the world was good : a commodious, beautiful and superb mansion, altogether fit for the abode of an order of sinless creatures compounded of the rational and the animal natures. And notwithstanding the frightful change it underwent by means of the apostacy, it is still in itself, a good world ; that is to say, it is a building well adapted to the condition of the guilty tenants—“ prisoners of hope”—who are destined to pass a short residence in it. What though the “ thorn and the thistle,” the noxious weed

and the prickly briar, grow up spontaneously, whilst plants and trees that are good for food must be cultivated with great care and toil? And what though man is impelled to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, and to be daily mustering up the resources of his mind and body in order to reduce stubborn matter to his use and convenience? All this is entirely befitting his present condition, to wit, the depravation of his affections, appetites and passions, and his state of trial: it precludes the possibility of general idleness, which would render him more vicious by many degrees than he is now. What though crosses and disappointments, sickness and sorrow, are common to the lot of man, and there is such an emptiness or deficiency in even the best of his enjoyments that not a single individual of the whole race is in all respects happy? These very evils are preventives of moral evil. Through the divine influence, in a thousand instances they curb our passions, humanize our dispositions, and bring our minds to a right state of recollection and to new and better purposes of action. And finally, what though besides that wordly enjoyments are ever mixed with alloy and are ever unsatisfactory, life itself is frail and fleeting? What though Death is daily mowing down his thousands and tens of thousands without distinction of age or degree? Awful as is this law of mortality, and clearly evincive as it is of original transgression, it is a dispensation of which there is moral necessity. If men were, in this world, immortal, or held their lives, upon a secure lease, for hundreds of years, in all probability a great proportion of them would extend their transgressions far beyond the present bounds of human depravity. The consciousness of the shortness and brittleness of life, bridles in avarice and ambition. The fear of death is a strong curb upon appetite and passion. Death

breaks in pieces gigantic schemes of oppression, delivers the world from unfeeling oppressors, scatters abroad the unrighteous hoards of avaricious worldlings, and is the great humbler of upstart pride and arrogance.

It is, I repeat, the *moral* condition and conduct of the tenant, that mars the beauty and poisons the comforts of the tenement. The promised “new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,” would be no unhappy world even with the physical form and properties of the one we inhabit.

Were the heavens above as black as sackcloth, or glaring with light of a frightful hue, and were the earth beneath us presenting to our senses nothing but objects of disgust and horror ; then, indeed, the world would correspond with the rueful descriptions which querulous genius has given of it. Then, indeed, the following lines of poetry would possess no less truth than beauty.

“ For ah ! what is there of inferior birth,  
That breathes, or creeps upon the dust of earth,  
What wretched creature, of what wretched kind,  
Than man more weak, calamitous and blind ?”

But the truth is, though fallen man is weak, and blind, and sinful, yet his earthly condition, so far from being *calamitous* beyond that of all other creatures, is attended with a great many circumstances of comfort and delight.

The earth, even in its present state, is filled with the goodness of the beneficent Creator ; and *Man* is the object of his especial care and bounty. Is it nothing that, above and around us, light and colours, with their corresponding shades, are infinitely diversified, to soothe and gratify the eye ? That we are furnished with such sweet and melodious sounds to charm the ear ? That the earth affords such a variety to delight the palate ? That it is decked with the enamel of innumerable flowers of varied colours and delicious fragrance ?

That by a nice admixture of the different species of air, the atmosphere is so exactly fitted for respiration? That the silk-worm spins to adorn, the sheep bears a fleece to warm, and the ground itself yields the rudiments of fine linen to array, our frail bodies? That, in all parts of the world, there is furnished a supply of medicaments for the particular diseases of the climate? That Fire, Air, and Water, along with a great variety of minerals, are made, in so many ways, to minister to the convenience and adornment as well as to the subsistence of our race?—Is all this aggregate of earthly benefits and blessings to be accounted as nothing? Shall *Man*, loaded as he is with so many unmerited temporal blessings, complain and fret because they are mixed with natural evil? Especially shall *he* do it when a full moiety of the calamities he suffers are brought upon him, not by the direct hand of Providence, but by his own follies and crimes?

To love the word more than Him who made it, and life more than Him who gave it, is that worldly-mindedness which is base and criminal. But a moderate or subordinate love of the world, of life, and of all its innocent enjoyments, along with lively gratitude to the Donor, is what becomes our rational and moral nature. Whereas, on the other hand, to think or speak contemptuously of the common gifts of Providence, betokens as little of humility as of thankfulness.

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#### NUMBER LXXXII.

*Of the two most noted methods for commencing conversation.*

THE old Persian rule, not to speak till there is something weighty to say, though well enough in theory, is

too difficult of practice. For, with most of mankind, and especially those who have the phlegm of the English, or the Dutch blood, in their veins, it would be an intolerable restriction upon the freedom of speech.

Conversation is a sort of commerce, in which there is absolute necessity for the circulation of coin of small denominations, as well as of that which is possessed of great intrinsic value. Not that countenance is ever, or on any account, to be given to *base* coin. Far from the pale of colloquial commerce be the profane oath, the obscene or impious jest, the open or covert slander, the language of deceit and falsehood : far from it be every word of immoral or indecent tenor. It must however be admitted, for such is the fact, that, in carrying on this kind of commerce, there is urgent need of small change, and of a great deal of it. For lack of this light commodity, many a man of deep learning and excellent moral qualities, makes but a wretched figure in any other company than that of the learned. And how can it be otherwise? since no part of his capital is adapted to the commerce of common life.

For the most part it is more difficult to set talk a going, than to keep it going after it is begun. Now this difficulty often arises from a fastidious or squeamish feeling ; each one adhering too strictly to the aforementioned rule, not to speak till something of consequence is thought of to be said. For which reason, the interview begins with profound silence : the individuals gazing upon one another, and each longing to put the tongue in motion, but all alike unable to find a pertinent observation to commence with. And what renders the case more deplorable, is, that the longer the silence is continued, the harder it is to break it.

Now to obviate this distressing difficulty, custom has introduced into colloquial commerce a singular kind of

small change consisting of *truisms*, or self-evident sayings. As this manner of speech is fairly within the compass of every one's ability, so it has the advantage of always steering clear of contradiction.

A. and B. for example, happening to meet together, the one instantly utters a truism, which the other agrees to forthwith, affirming roundly, and without any mental reservation, that the thing is even so: And then the said affirmant, in his turn brings forth another truism, which, the politeness of the first speaker accedes to with a prompt profession of undoubting belief. By this time, or at least after the interchange of some half a dozen truisms, the conversation begins either to deepen or to tower; and peradventure it becomes quite edifying in its progress.

There is no single source so prolific of auxiliaries of talk, or rather of means to begin it with, as the *weather*. It is pleasant or unpleasant, warm or cool, wet or dry, calm, breezy, or boisterous. The sun either shines or it does not. There are signs in the heavens, sometimes of rain, sometimes of snow, sometimes of cold. Not an evening passes over us, but is either moony or starry, or else cloudy and darksome: and the moon herself assumes several different phases in the course of her month.

Now all this, along with a great deal of kindred matter besides, furnishes a never-failing abundance to begin talk, especially in the climate we live in, which, more fortunately for our colloquy than our corporeal weal, is so perpetually varying. Whether it rains or shines, whether it be calm or windy, whether the evening be lightsome or dismal dark; in short, whatever turn the weather happens to take, we report the naked truth of it to such persons as we fall in company with, and they frankly acknowledge that, in good sooth, their

own impressions and opinions perfectly accord with ours.

Grant, that these truisms, or common-place remarks, can neither instruct nor entertain ; yet they do no harm, and meanwhile are of special use in the threshold of conversation. But though *talkers* seem licensed to make a free use of them, the same indulgence belongs not to *speakers* and *writers*. This is so important a distinction, that were it generally minded, many a discourse and speech would be abridged one half at least, and many a massy volume would shrink into a puny pamphlet.

Another method of commencing conversation, particularly with strangers, is assailing them with questions that “ come home to their business and bosoms.” This method has venerable antiquity of its side. *Whence comest, and whither goest thou ? What is thy occupation, and of what people art thou ?*—are questions, with which travellers were wont to be greeted at first sight, in times of old, when manners were natural and unsophisticated ; and they seem always to have been answered as frankly, and with the like good humour, as they were asked.

Nor is this custom defensible solely upon the ground of its claims to high antiquity ; for, placed merely on its own bottom, much might be said in favour of it. In the first place, it gives the stranger a fair opportunity of talking about himself ; an employment, for the most part delicious to the heart both of man and woman.— Furthermore, it shows that the querist, as a fellow member of the great human family, feels a lively interest in behalf of every one of that family he meets. And finally, it discovers a fund of curious inquisitiveness, inherent in the breasts of none but ingenious mortals, and which, under proper encouragement, seldom fails of

turning to some good account. Look ye : the Athenians, who were of all men the most ingenious, had a superabundance of this same curiosity : whilst, on the other hand, we are told by travellers and voyagers, of certain tribes now existing, who manifest no curiosity at all ; and that circumstance is considered as a clear mark of their stupidity.

Upon the whole, however, if I might be permitted to give an opinion on so nice a point, I would say, that to begin conversation with remarks upon the weather, is the better way of the two ; especially, since the variableness of our climate furnishes a colloquial stock of that sort amply enough for the thousandth generation.

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### NUMBER LXXXIII.

#### *Of the inquisitiveness of Children.*

ONE of the distinctive qualities of our nature is the principle of curiosity ; whereby we are distinguishable even more clearly, than by the principle of reason, from the brute animals, of which several kinds seem possessed of some small degree of rational faculty, but very seldom, or never, manifest an inquisitive curiosity after any kind of information. Whereas, in our own species, the disposition to pry out the *How*, and the *Why*, is sometimes seen from the very cradle, and is always to be regarded as an auspicious token ; it being, in fact, the germin of all future improvement—the genuine bud of intellectual fruit. Nor scarcely is it conceivable, how great advantage might be taken of such a toward disposition, were it under the constant management of superior skill united with patient in-

dustry: But, in the nurture and training up of children, this important particular is, for the most part, overlooked; and their early curiosity either damped or misdirected. And, in this way, many are made dullards or frivolous, who might have been shaped to intellectual excellence.

“Curiosity in children,” observes the admirable Locke, “is but an appetite after knowledge, and therefore ought to be encouraged in them, not only as a good sign, but as the great instrument nature has provided to remove that ignorance they are born with; and which, without this busy inquisitiveness, will make them dull and useless creatures.”

The passage here quoted, is a *text*, which might furnish matter enough for a long practical discourse on education. But my design is, only to throw out hints to be improved and enlarged upon by the intelligent reader.

Were we ourselves cast upon a strange country, where every thing was unknown to us, and were destined to spend our lives there, our only way of acquiring the knowledge of it, would be by questioning the experienced inhabitants. Accordingly, if not downright dolts, we should feel disposed to ask them a multitude of questions, of which the most part would seem frivolous, impertinent, and even ridiculous, to those who knew the country well. Now, should they all, with one accord, refuse to answer our questions, or turn us off with false or improper answers, or laugh us to scorn for our ignorance and impertinence, and even proceed to chide us with contumelious expressions, for the interruption and trouble given them by our inquisitiveness; such treatment would naturally damp and discourage us, and involve us at last in the hopeless condition of contented ignorance.

But should we there, find only a few to heed our inquiries ; to give patient and correct answers to our questions ; to encourage our curiosity by the gentleness of their manner and the readiness of their replies : how deeply, should we feel ourselves indebted to those precious few, and how happily facilitated would be our progress !

And such as this, but yet more eminently so, is the condition of little children. Not merely are they strangers in a strange land ; they are come into a world where, to them, every thing is new and strange ; a world, of which, and of all therein, they are utterly ignorant. And how do these newly-born citizens of the world act ? Why, just as persons come to years, would act under the like circumstances. God hath given them an appetite for knowledge, and they seek after it with ardency. *What is this ? What is that made for ? How is it done, and why is it so ?* These, and scores of similar questions, are asked in early childhood ; and though they would be impertinent and ridiculous if coming from the lips of adult age, yet from the mouths of these little prattlers they are strictly proper. *To them* the information they enquire after is material, though their questions may seem trifling in the eyes of those to whom the things are long since known.

A great deal might be made out of the inquisitiveness or curiosity, so natural to children. If rightly managed, it would be the main-spring of intellectual improvement. Were their enquiries properly encouraged, it would lead them to think for themselves ; it would put them upon the exercise of their reason, as well as of their memory ; and would settle in them the habit of enquiry. At the same time, whenever there were observable in them a forward pertness, or any real impertinence, it might easily be checked with-

out dampening their curiosity, by parents or teachers possessing any considerable degree of prudence and skill.

But all this, requires a considerable degree of toil. It is by much the easier way, barely to give the child a lesson to learn by heart, and whip him if his memory fail, than to aid in enlightening and enlarging the infantile faculties of his understanding. And so, we generally take this easier way. We stop their little mouths, when they presume to interrupt, or *puzzle* us, with their questions, and, instead of encouraging them to start subjects of themselves, we confine them to our own prescriptions. We pinion the young mind, and then bid it soar.

Some parents, observing carefully the old proverb, to "nip in the bud," indignantly rebuke the inquisitiveness of their children, as insufferable impertinence. And sure enough, such children are effectually *nipt in the bud*; for it is ten to one, that they will never become men and women of enquiring minds. Others, again, turn off the questions of their children with false answers, and thereby directly lead them to the practice of lying. I have seen fathers, so stately and stern, that their children scarcely durst speak to them, and much less familiarly to question them. And I have seen schoolmasters, who would requite the familiar question of a little pupil, with a frightening frown, if not with a hard blow.

## NUMBER LXXXIV.

*Of the influence of Early Impressions upon all the following periods of life.*

MR. LOCKE, in his invaluable treatise concerning Education, relates the story which here follows :

“ There was in a town in the west, a man of disturbed brain, whom the boys used to tease, when he came in their way. This fellow one day seeing in the streets one of those lads that used to vex him, stepped into a cutler’s shop he was near, and there seizing on a naked sword made after the boy, who, seeing him coming so armed, betook himself to his feet, and ran for his life, and, by good luck, had strength and heels enough to reach his father’s house before the madman could get up to him. The door was only latched ; and when he had the latch in his hand, he turned about his head to see how near his pursuer was, who was in the entrance of the porch with his sword up, ready to strike, and he had just time to get in and clap to the door to avoid the blow, which, though his body escaped, his mind did not. This frightening idea made so deep an impression there, that it lasted many years, if not all his life after ; for, telling this story when he was a man, he said, that after that time till then, he never went in at that door (that he could remember) at any time, without looking back, whatever business he had in his head, or how little soever before he came thither, he thought of this madman.”

This instance, though a most extraordinary one, is rather so in degree than in kind ; for thousands have been haunted all their life time with frightening ideas received in childhood.

I will venture to lay it down as a position at least probable, that the children of Adam's race are born into the world very much alike, excepting the rare instances of idiotism. Their faculties and inclinations are nearly the same, and the differences which appear in after-times, are owing, in a great measure, to the instruction they receive, the company they keep, and the manner in which they are managed. This assumption is, I humbly conceive, fully defensible on the broad ground of reason and experience, and too obvious to escape general observation. But it is far less obvious, though equally true, that *early impressions* contribute very materially to making the difference in human characters—relative to their tastes, their dispositions, and the bent of their faculties.

Whilst the infant is yet cradled in the mother's arms, long ere it can articulate words, it is beginning to receive impressions, which will influence, more or less, the future periods of life. And though we know not in what precise degrees such early impressions operate; how far their opposites render some irascible, revengeful, or sullen, and others mild, well-tempered, and social; how far they contribute to the firmness of the future character on the one hand, and to a cowardly timidity on the other;—yet it is beyond all reasonable doubt, that their influence is great and durable.

The Arabs of the Great Desert, have all a sameness of character among themselves, together with striking points of difference from every other class of mankind; and their character has been all along the same, from the time of the patriarch Jacob to the present day. Nor is it altogether unaccountable, though truly wonderful. For they have all, and always, been used to the same visible scenery, and derived their earliest as well as later impressions from the same objects and sources.

Now, were it possible to reverse the conditions of two newly-born infants—the one an Arab, and the other of good christian parentage—by placing each in the family of the other ; it is full likely that the latter, when come to years, would be altogether an Ishmaelite in feeling and manners, and the former considerably assimilated to the family that adopted him. Nay there would be no great hazard in saying farther—It is full likely that this assimilation would begin to be visible in each, antecedently to any direct and positive education ; that the one would take the stamp of the fierce and furious-looking mother, while at her breast ; and that the other, at the same early period, would begin to be oppositely moulded, from impressions occasioned by the mildness and sweetness of maternal care.

A simple metrical verse learnt in infancy, is clearly remembered for scores of years. And much more ; early incidents occasioning horror, terror, distressing shame, or violent indignation, leave such deep and distinct impressions upon the memory as are seldom, or never, effaced entirely. I am told by a respectable, pious woman, advanced very far in age, that, even now, as all along heretofore, she seldom shuts her eyes for sleep but she is haunted with the horrible spectres as it were, of the savage Indians who murdered her father and mother before her face when she was a little child. How great must have been the whole amount of her sufferings from that circumstance, during the long space of upwards of sixty years !

And neither few nor small, throughout the whole course of their lives, must have been *their* sufferings, whose infantile minds had been accustomed to the frightening bugbears of superstition. For even though, in riper years, their reason should convince them never so clearly of the absurdity of such fears, yet the impress

upon the imagination is indelible. Times have been, when stories of witchcraft, of spectres in the dark, and especially about the sepulchres of the dead, were commonly reported and fully believed ; when a candle burning blue, was the sign of a spirit in the house ; when the tallow rising up against the wick of the candle, was styled a winding-sheet, and reckoned an omen of death in the family ; and when a coal in the shape of a coffin, flying out of the fire toward any particular person, betokened that the death of that person was near.—With what labour and pains did they weave for themselves, and for their children, the web of misery ! In those ages of gloomy superstition, which even now are but recently past away, the real ills of life were far exceeded by the imaginary ones.

But to return from this digression : children possessed of a more than common susceptibility of shame, may be injured for life by putting that distressful feeling to a too severe trial ; and others may be made shameless by shaming them too often ; while a temper naturally stiff and unyielding, may be turned to revengeful, and made desperately malignant, by impressions of injustice and cruelty experienced in the season of childhood.

In families, and in schools, where almost the popish inquisition is practised upon the children ; where they are compelled to confess unproved and unproveable faults, and sometimes made, by the torture of the whip or ferule, to confess faults of which they are not guilty ;—how pernicious are the impressions left upon their minds, which, ever after, will rankle in their memories ! And so again, when children, by bad management at first, are made disgusted with their learning, seldom, and not without great difficulty, can they be brought to love it heartily thereafter.

## NUMBER LXXXV.

*Of calamitous reverses in respect to worldly circumstances.*

“ Think how frail  
And full of danger is the life of man,  
Now prosperous, now adverse ; who feels no ills  
Should therefore fear them ; and when fortune smiles  
Be doubly cautious, lest destruction come  
Remorseless on him.”

SOPHOCLES.

IN this free, commercial, speculating and money-loving country, the wheel of fortune is turning up blanks and prizes alternately ; some families decaying and sinking, and others rising to wealth ; the griefs of the former greatly overbalancing the *real* joys of the latter.

One of the bitterest calamities of life, is the sudden fall from affluence, or competence, to poverty. Not that what *we* call poverty, is so very distressing of itself. In some countries it implies a privation of the indispensable necessities of life, or the sufferance of hunger and nakedness : but *here*, few are so poor but that, with prudent care and assiduous industry, they may provide themselves with wholesome food and comfortable raiment. Multitudes, in this country, of the poorer classes, are neither the least contented, nor the least happy. Unaccustomed to the elegancies and luxuries of life, they feel no hankering after them ; and accustomed to earn their bread by their toil, they regard labour as no hardship. It procures them two very essential enjoyments—keen appetite and sound sleep : and with respect to real and heartfelt jovialness, they, very often, have more than an equal share.

That degree of poverty which includes not in it, the pinching want of real necessaries, wounds the *mind* alone : and it often deeply wounds the minds of those who have fallen from easy and plentiful circumstances. To *them* it is an evil indeed. A comparison of the past with the present, renders the present irksome to them, if not intolerable. The real or imaginary neglects they experience in society, and from even their former familiars, plant as it were thorns in their hearts. Time wears away, however, the pungency of first impressions. There is (and the goodness of the Creator is clearly manifested in it) as it were a principle of elasticity in the minds of human beings, which enables them to recover themselves when crushed down by the shocks of adversity, and to accommodate after a while, their feelings to their circumstances with marvellous facility. But far above and beyond this, the balm that Religion furnishes, has the never-failing virtue of removing the corrosions of the heart, occasioned by worldly misfortunes.

No human prudence can always secure its subject from disastrous reverses in worldly circumstances. In times of old, “ there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house” in which the sons and daughters of the man of the East—as distinguished for benevolence and charity as for wealth—“ were eating, and drinking wine.” In a single hour, his vast substance, and the natural heirs to it, were all swept from him. And recent experience teaches, that in America as well as in Asia, a *great wind* may destroy in a single hour, what many years of painful industry had accumulated. The most flattering condition of worldly prosperity is sometimes

found to be like the smoothness of the surface of the waters, in their approximation to a cataract.\*

But though it is not in the power of prudence to secure earthly possessions in all cases ; yet often, and for the most part, they are lost by imprudence. It ought to be held in general remembrance, " that nothing will supply the want of prudence ; that negligence and irregularity, long continued," will sink both fortune and character ; and that if there be but little *moral* good in worldly prudence, there is a great deal of *moral* evil in imprudence, or in such wastefulness and improvidence as not only lead to want and wretchedness, but often to the ruin or deep injury of creditors.

If we take a careful survey of American society, I believe we shall find that the more part of the families who have experienced a distressing reverse in their circumstances, owe it to one or other of the three following causes—the inheritance of wealth—the greediness of wealth—and the affectation of wealth.

" Riches certainly make themselves wings ; they fly away."—Now these wings, as of an eagle, that bear away riches from the places of their wonted residence, it is worthy of particular notice, are such as naturally grow out of riches ; they are wings which *riches make themselves* :—they are idleness, wastefulness, improvidence and prodigality ; all of which a very large proportion of the children of wealth inherit, along with their estates.

A great many fall into poverty, not for lack of industry, but from inordinate greediness of wealth. " They make haste to be rich."—Scorning the secure competence they already possess, or which is fairly within

\* Written in 1815, soon after the dire calamity, by wind and flood, which suddenly beset the towns of Providence and Newport.

their reach, they put it to risk upon the precarious contingency of suddenly attaining the condition of opulence. Impatient of slow gains, the fruits of regular industry, they dash into hazardous enterprizes. If unsuccessful—and they have more than an even chance to be so—they are presently ruined: or if brilliant success attend their steps for a while, so that they heap up riches in sudden abundance; this run of good luck expands their hopes and desires, and they plunge anew into still deeper speculations, till unexpectedly the fallacious ground on which they stand cleaves from under them, and their fortunes are all swallowed up.

If the two great destroyers which I have just mentioned, have devoured their thousands, the one that is yet to be mentioned has devoured its ten thousands. The heritors of overgrown wealth are but few: and though there are very many greedy and rash adventurers, yet their numbers bear no proportion with the numbers of those who are ruining their circumstances by an absurd and pitiful affectation of wealth. This last is, in economics, what consumption is among bodily distempers, the most common and fatal disease of all. The affectation of wealth, or the vanity of making a show beyond our condition, in apparel, in the elegancies of the table, in furniture, and in every thing else that is thought likely to attract attention and admiration, is the consuming *Plague* that has already destroyed, and which is even now destroying, the earthly substance and comforts of innumerable families, who, but for this disease, might rank with the happiest of mankind.

## NUMBER LXXXVI.

*Of the attention due both to mind and body.*

“To hold the Golden mean—  
To keep the end in view, and follow nature.”

THE union of an eminent degree of moral, intellectual, and literary endowments, with such bodily activity as is common amongst the savage tribes, would form a singular, but a very desirable character. The wild man of the woods can run as fast as the four-footed animals with which he associates; and sometimes, it is said, runs them down and seizes them as his prey. A savage who depends upon his bow has not the swiftness of the wild man, yet he can walk, or amble along, seventy or eighty miles a day, and thirty, or forty miles upon a stretch. One cannot help observing a peculiar dignity and gracefulness, in the gait of our American Indians, particularly the chiefs of their tribes. They go forward with a firm step, their body kept in a straight line, their head erect, and seem to move with as much ease as a boat in a fair wind. Strength, agility, and hardiness of body, together with courage, being with them the highest point of perfection; the whole course of their education has a bearing towards this end. They live in the open air, and exercise, and repose themselves alternately, and so as to give suppleness to their joints and ease and nimbleness to their motions.

Mr. Bartram, in his account of the Lower Creeks, a tribe of Indians inhabiting East and West Florida, says:—“On one hand, you see among them troops of boys; some shooting with the bow, some enjoying one kind of diversion, and some another: on the other hand are seen bevies of girls, wandering through orange-

groves, and over fields and meadows, gathering flowers and berries in their baskets, or lolling under the shades of flowery trees, or chasing one another in sport, and striving to paint each others' faces with the juice of their berries."

These Greeks, I would venture to presume, resemble considerably the ancient Greeks, about the time they instituted their celebrated games, consisting of running, wrestling, boxing, &c.; which are often alluded to in the writings of St. Paul. In the Heroic, or rather, the Barbarous ages of Greece, that people were little, if any, better informed, or more civilized, than our American Greeks. Their first object, in the education of their children, was, to inspire them with courage, and give them strength, agility, swiftness, and all the other bodily perfections; that so they might be able to defend their liberties and the independence of their respective tribes.—After a while they were smit with the love of learning, and Greece became finally the fountain of literature, and even spread the arts and sciences over Italy; whence at last they were diffused throughout all Europe. But the Greeks still kept up their games, and all their customary exercises of body: and they are the only people upon history, who have taken very much care and pains to make the improvements of body and mind keep an even pace together. Their circumstances were peculiarly favourable to this; since, as to labour, it was all done by their slaves.

Amongst modern civilized nations the great masses of the people follow daily labour for a livelihood; and among these again, the tillers of the ground stand in the foremost rank. They, living in the open air, and using exercises which expand the chest and brace the nerves and muscles, acquire an uncommon degree of hardiness and vigour of body; yet, by reason of the in-

tensity of their toils, they soon lose that jauntiness of limbs, that ease of motion, that nimbleness of gait, which the savage retains even to old age.—Labourers in the mechanical arts have more or less bodily activity, generally, according to the nature of their occupations. Those trades which require a sedentary life, a seclusion from the air, and a curved posture of body which compresses the lungs, as well as those that expose the artificers to a poisonous effluvia, tend to bring on weakness and disease, and often-times hasten death.

The wealthy part of mankind, whose circumstances free them from the necessity of constant, drudging toil, might, one would think, rise superior to others in proportion to their superior advantages. But how rarely is it so in fact? Their luxury and debauchery poison both mind and body; insomuch that where vast possessions are vested unalienably in certain families, as in some parts of Europe, most of those enormously wealthy families, in the course of ages, dwindle down to a race of pygmies, in comparison with whom the savage holds an enviable rank. The savage state and the state of luxurious refinement are the two extremes; between which, *somewhere*, there lies a point that is most favourable to the happiness of man, and to the general developement of his faculties.

The Learned might have the best chance to unite in themselves bodily and mental excellencies, if prudent care were early begun and constantly continued. If there were used frequent exercise in the open air, both at the commencement and throughout the whole course of a life of study; if study and exercise were alternate, at short intervals, the body would retain its vigorous tone, the mind would be relieved, and the progress of learning be promoted, rather than retarded. But this is often reversed in practice. Observe a scholar that

has just left the occupations of agriculture : Observe his ruddy countenance and florid health. Observe the same scholar two or three years after ; see his dim eye, his faded cheek, his emaciated body, the debility of his whole frame !—And what has operated this melancholy change ?—Continued mental exercises, without corresponding exercises of the body. He has been a hard student, and has treasured up Greek, and Latin, and Algebra, and Logic ; but, for want of frequent intervals of exercise in the open air, the juices of his body have corrupted, like the water in a standing pool.

We are compound beings, consisting of animal and mental parts and faculties. It is a most desirable thing to have “a sound mind in a sound body ;” and therefore, whilst the principal attention is to be paid to intellectual, moral, and religious improvements, there is no small attention due also to the health, soundness, and agility of the corporeal part of our nature.

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## NUMBER LXXXVII.

### *Of the general proneness to petty scandal.*

As if there were not enough, and more than enough, of prattlement, from human tongues alone, a great deal of pains are taken, in some parts of the world, to learn birds to talk. Families, of opulence and rank, in one country and another, are said to have devoted a considerable portion of their time to the advancement of this species of education : nor would it be altogether time lost, if they would mind to teach their birds a few sound and pithy maxims for domestic use, and the benefit of their visitors.

The following anecdote I will cite as an example for the purpose of showing to what good account the lingo of speaking birds might be turned, if their education were conducted either on moral principle, or upon principles of domestic economy. In the city of London, as Goldsmith informs us, two men, living directly opposite to one another, in the same street, had a quarrel together, on account of the one having informed against the other for not paying the duties on his liquors ; and that the aggrieved party, after teaching his parrot to repeat the ninth commandment, placed the cage at the front of his house ; so that whenever the informer on the opposite side of the street stepped out of his own door, he heard from the parrot this admonition, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

This sacred precept is to be understood as possessing a very wide latitude of meaning ; comprehending not only perjury and gross calumny, which are both punishable by civil law, but also evil speaking, in all its multifarious shapes and degrees. It is obvious to remark, that although the prohibitory precepts in the eighth article, and the ninth, of the holy decalogue, are both levelled against evils that are alike prejudicial and pernicious to society, yet the laws of society take much more concern in the one than in the other. Every well-regulated civil society arms itself against *theft*, and metes out punishment as well to petty pilferers as to the highway robber : and yet the violations of the next succeeding article of divine prohibition, pass, for the most part, without punishment, and almost without notice. Not but that money is *trash*, in comparison with character ; so that he who steals the one, does far less injury than he who wounds the other. But the fact is, civil law is quite incompetent to the task of taking

cognizance of the violations of the ninth commandment, save in a few instances of flagrant enormity.

The trespasses of the tongue, in this way, are so innumerable, so diverse, and oftentimes so artful, that no legislator could classify them, and much less enact laws that would reach them wholly, without destroying the liberty of speech altogether. And besides, there is, in society, a great deal less averseness to evil speaking than to theft. If one have his money or his goods stolen, he no sooner makes it known, than his neighbours join with him in searching for the thief, who, if found and convicted, is sure to be punished; because common zeal, as well as common consent, takes side against the culprit. But the pilferers from character fare less hard; or rather, they are tolerated, provided they manage with art and address, and mingle some wit with their malice or their levity.

And as petty violations of this part of the decalogue meet with impunity, so also they meet with encouragement. Somehow, there is a sad propensity in our fallen nature to be pleased with backbiting, and a smack of it gives a zest to general conversation. Few are altogether without envy, which ever takes delight in a backbiting or detracting tongue. Few are without some conscious and visible faults; and the faulty are naturally prone to take pleasure in the noticeable faults of others, as it tends to quiet them about their own. From these causes, and still oftener perhaps, from thoughtless levity, encouragement is given, almost every where, to the small dealers in detraction, who, all together, compose a pretty numerous body.

It requires no great stretch of charity to believe, that there are very many persons who never have been guilty of any dishonest action, and much less of downright theft. But it is to be apprehended, that there are very few indeed, who have never, in all their lives, borne

*false witness against a neighbour*, in some degree or other, either by unwarrantably spreading ill reports, or else by giving too willing an ear to slander and defamation. It is the evil which most easily besets us ; of which we are least apt to be aware ; and which many men and women practise, without compunction, and almost without thought, although apparently of estimable characters in other respects.

SEMPRONIA, is such a very fury in the cause of virtue and decorum, that, first or last, nearly the whole sisterhood of her acquaintance has been lampooned by her tongue. So far from showing partiality to her own sex, nothing heats her temper and throws her into a fit of boiling rage, like the faults of *women*. Not to mention the abhorrence with which she ever speaks of the wretched victims of seduction, she is of purer eyes than to behold, in a female especially, even the least aberration from the path of propriety, without emotions of indignation and expressions of reproach. Frugal of praise, and liberal of censure, she speaks but little of those whose characters furnish no topics for scandal ; whilst all her eloquence is employed in expatiating on faults, frailties, and follies. The truth of it is, there are very few whose garments are so white that she can discover on them no spots ; and it is on the spots, rather than the fair parts, that she fixes her attention and bestows her remarks.

Yet, after all, Sempronia is remarkably perpendicular in much of her conduct. Not for the world would she tell a downright, wilful, lie. She means to speak the truth and nothing else ; but the truth she *peppers* with a vengeance. Sour in nature, elated with an extravagant opinion of herself, jealous of qualities that threaten to eclipse her, and thinking her own excellencies will show to best advantage by displaying them in

contrast with the foibles of other women, she no sooner finds that a female acquaintance has said or acted a little *so so*, than her passions are let loose, and she talks herself into a sore throat. In the meanwhile she mistakes her fastidiousness of humour for delicacy of taste, and her censorious, irritable temper, for extreme sensibility.

Were one to admit the old absurd notion of our being born under some particular planet, or constellation, one could hardly help exclaiming, “ What a pity that the birth of Sempronia, a woman of some very respectable qualities, instead of the constellation of the crab, had not been under the *sweet influences of Pleiades!*”\*

\* Job xxxviii, 31.

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## NUMBER LXXXVIII.

*Of enjoying Independence as to worldly circumstances without possessing wealth.*

INDEPENDENCE in regard to worldly condition, is an object of rational desire and laudable pursuit. But the word *Independence* must here be understood in a qualified and very limited sense. Strictly speaking, no man living is independent. For not to mention, that all depend alike on Him in whom we live and have our being; there is amongst mankind, a mutual dependence, from the lowest even up to the highest point in the scale of society: so that the rich man needs his poor but industrious neighbours, well nigh as much as they need him. Should they refuse to sell him their labour, he would be fain to drudge for himself, notwithstanding the vastness of his wealth. This mutual dependence is a salu-

tary restraint both upon the rich and the poor; it curbs the pride of the one and the envy of the other, and even tends to link them together in mutual amity.

Moreover, that independence of circumstances which should be made the object of general desire and pursuit, does in no wise imply large possessions. So far otherwise, one possessed of but barely competent means of support, provided he lives within his means, is hardly less independent than if he were in the enjoyment of a fortune. Does the possessor of an ample fortune enjoy personal independence? So also does the possessor of a small farm, which furnishes him with only the necessaries of life: and so also does the useful labourer, whose labour affords a supply to his real wants. But if the small farmer must needs be a man of fashion or pleasure, he loses his farm, and withal his independence. Or, if the labourer neglects his calling, or spends faster than he earns, his independence is quickly gone. Nay, even though the labourer should support himself, independently throughout all the days of his health and vigour, yet assuredly he must fall into a condition of dependence at last, unless he have the foresight and prudence to lay up some part of his earnings against the seasons of sickness and old age.

“Our views in life,” says the celebrated British Junius, “should be directed to a solid, however moderate independence; for without it no man can be happy nor even honest.”

This sentiment has in it, however, as I humbly conceive, some mixture of error. Virtuousness of disposition depends not upon exterior circumstances. In the deepest shades of poverty, and even in situations of abject dependence, there are persons not only very honest but very pious, and who are happy in the daily enjoyment of the banquet of contentment. There are

those, and not a few, in almost every part of the christianized world, of whom the following lines in a Scotch ballad are no less descriptive, than of the happy old couple in whose mouths they are put.

" We have lived all our life time contented,  
Since the day we became first acquainted ;  
True, we've been but poor,  
And we are so to this hour,  
Yet we never repin'd nor lamented."

Nevertheless, *our views in life should be directed to a solid however moderate independence.* It is as much our duty as our interest, to employ diligent and prudent endeavours to escape poverty and want; to provide "things honest" for ourselves and families; to lay up against seasons of sickness and the decays of age; and even to strive hard to put ourselves in a condition, in which we can be rather the dispensers than the receivers of charity. Utter negligence in these matters, so far from evincing nobleness of spirit, is, for the most part, dishonourable and mean, and commonly terminates in abjectness both of circumstances and of mind. The loss or destitution of personal independence, or the condition of beggarly want, has no little aptness and likelihood to occasion the loss of integrity and of *all moral principle.* It was when Esau came from the field at the point to die of famishment, that he sold his birth-right.

It would be impossible to tell what precise quantity of worldly estate is just sufficient, and no more than sufficient; since it would depend upon a variety of circumstances growing out of the particular state of society, and on a number of other items which could not be calculated to a hair. The best rule is, to take up satisfied with the appointment which providence makes, and, having food and raiment, therewith to be content.

The middle state of life has been thought, by the wise, to afford the best means both for the enjoyment of comfort and for the practice of virtue. Under this impression, a pious sage of old made the following petition to heaven, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." I know of none among the moderns, however much they may differ in points of religion or of politics, who have any objection to the first clause of this prayer of Agur; but in this money-loving age, it is questionable whether many can be found, either male or female, who pray heartily that riches may not fall to their lot, or who would run with all their might to escape from a shower of gold that should threaten to fall into their laps. It is, however, certain, that riches and poverty are two extremes, each encompassed with peculiar evils; and without saying, what none will believe, that extreme riches is as much to be dreaded as extreme poverty, I would wish to impress this useful truth, that people in middling circumstances if they would only think so themselves, have enough, and have reason to be thankful for their lot, rather than to repine at it.

In no country else perhaps, is a moderate independence so fairly within the reach of the people, as in the one we inhabit. And a pity it truly is, that so many of us sell as it were this our birthright, not for *pottage* to assuage hunger, but for what can only feed our vanity. In short, the times are come, which imperiously demand, especially of the commonalty as well as of the poorer classes, a close attention to saving economy. No longer will it be optional with us, of the poorer, or even of the middling sort, whether we shall live in this style or that; the only style of living left us, will be the plain and frugal one. No other alternative shall we have, but either to economize, after the manner of our

prudent ancestors, or else to sink into the hapless condition of pinching poverty and abject dependence.

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## NUMBER LXXXIX.

*Of the early and ardent desire for Power.*

THE love of power is as natural as to breathe. It shows itself in the first dawn of reason. How soon the infant begins to struggle to have his will and way! Ere he can speak, or walk, in the tone of his cry, and in his visage and motions, you may plainly read the stout words, *I will and I wont.* With impotent violence he squirms in his mothers' arms, in order to command the utmost of her attentions. The oftener he gains his point, with the more resolute boisterousness does he proceed to assert his claims to her submission, and to the devotion of all her time and faculties to the service of his single self.

Having brought under him his nursing mother, no sooner is he able to run about upon his legs, than he strives to extend his dominion. He exacts, of the other children, and of all about him, an implicit compliance with his will. When opposed or thwarted, he regards it as downright rebellion against his rightful authority; and accordingly swells with rage, which he deals out by blows, or vents off in harsh and grating music.

Moreover, among the earliest of his covetings is that of property. Scarcely any thing is more common than for little children to ask, with peculiar earnestness, *May we have this for our own?* Nor are they willing to take up with any thing short of such a covenant.—And why is it, that, not content with the mere use of

the thing, they are so fain to have it as their own ? It is because property is power. One has exclusive power over that which is exclusively one's own. Of this matter of fact, the child of four, seems almost as sensible as the man of forty : and hence it is, I conceive, that our appetite for property—which is but another name for power—begins even in infancy, and enlarges as our years increase. So true is it, that the passion for power is the ruling passion in human nature.

A question, then, arises here, as to the bearing that early education and discipline should have on the predominant passion or principle under consideration :—a question of vast importance, which, however, I could but barely touch now, even were I better able to do it justice.

In weeding a garden we take great care, lest, with the weeds, we root up also some precious plant. In like manner should we endeavour to weed as it were, the faults out of the minds of our children ; looking diligently that we neither spoil nor mar what the Eternal Wisdom has planted in them, or any part of the natural constitution of their frame. If, then, the love of power be a part of the radical constitution of man, the proper method of education is not to eradicate, but, to temper and curb it.

This species of discipline should be begun at a very early age, and managed with a firm but prudent hand. It is a task which, for the most part, devolves chiefly upon the mother. As soon as her infant offspring evidently appears to set up a resolution for the mastery, she has no alternative but either to conquer or submit ; for there is no such thing as balancing or dividing the power betwixt them. If she submit for the first time, it prepares the way for a second defeat, and indeed for an endless series of submission ; as the child, in such

a case, constantly becomes more refractory and usurping, and she more tame, yielding, and slavish. Thus she nurses up, not so much a son, as an imperious master. But provided the mother begins betimes and manages the matter with discretion, she may subdue the infant to her authority, and that without overmuch correction, even though she should have to encounter a more than ordinary obstinacy of temper ; which, so far from being an ill symptom in children, might, by proper curbing and culture, be made to eventuate in manly firmness of character.

The strife for mastery, as I said before, begins in the cradle, and, if not properly decided and settled there, it will be full likely as years increase, to appear in frightful shapes. For the contentions of little children, first with their mothers, and afterwards with one another, are the germin as it were of the contentions of grown men, which fill the earth with violence and blood.

Wherefore, nothing of human means would perhaps so much conduce to the future peace and happiness of mankind, as to break children betimes of a domineering spirit, and to weave as it were into their tender minds, sentiments and habits of mutual deference, civility and benevolence. If it were generally made a main part of education, (as assuredly it ought to be of *christian* education,) to learn children to curb their wills and to respect the rights and feelings of one another, an auspicious revolution in the affairs of the human kind might be reasonably looked for. A new and a happy æra might be expected, when fighting and killing, will not, as always hitherto, be the main subject of the history of man ;—when the fame and renown of men will no longer be built on the destruction of their fellow men.

## NUMBER XC.

*Of giving in Marriage.*

MARRIAGE, which is the first and most important of social institutions, is, in civilized societies, generally regulated by law ; but *giving* in marriage is a matter of custom. And, upon this last point, so far forth as the scantlet of my own information extends, custom is very diverse, in different parts of the world.

In the simple patriarchal ages, a father was as it were a sovereign and independent ruler over his own household. His daughters especially, were quite at his disposal. Yet, in *giving* a daughter in marriage, it was the custom, to consult her own inclination, as appears in the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis, with respect to the case of Rebeckah. In process of time, however, it seems to have become customary in Asia, for fathers to betroth their daughters with little or no apparent regard for their preferences or wishes. In that enslaved country, where women are held in a condition of extreme debasement, a girl is compelled to accept the husband assigned her by family authority, how much soever she may detest and loathe him in her heart.

Not that it is quite so, all over the vast continent of Asia. For there are in it, some nations simple in their manners, that still retain the primitive custom of allowing their females the privilege of a *negative* upon such of their suitors as are not fortunate enough to find favour with them.

In Dr. Clarke's description of the manners of the Calmuck Tartars resident in Asiatic Russia, is an instance in point, respecting their conjugal rites. "Calmuck women" (he says) "ride better than the men.

A male Calmuck on horseback looks as if he was intoxicated, and likely to fall off every instant, though he never loses his seat ; but the women sit with more ease, and ride with extraordinary skill. The ceremony of marriage among the Calmucks is performed on horseback. A girl is first mounted, who rides off in full speed. Her lover pursues ; and if he overtakes her, she becomes his wife, and the marriage is consummated on the spot ; after which she returns with him to his tent. But it sometimes happens, that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued, in which case she will not suffer him to overtake her ; and we were assured that *no instance occurs of a Calmuck girl being thus caught, unless she had a partiality for the pursuer.*"

Somewhat akin to this account of the Calmucks, is the following fabulous story of ancient date :—" *Atalanta had many admirers, but the only condition of obtaining her hand, was to beat her in running a race. At last Hyppodemus ran with her, and dropping some golden apples, which she stopped to pick up, he won the race and married her.*"—How much or how little this old fable, so obvious in its meaning, is illustrative of the female heart in the present age, is a delicate question that I shall not take upon me to decide.

Western Europe, from which ourselves have borrowed the most of our customs, allows women a rank unprecedented and unknown in the eastern world. This is owing greatly to its superior civilization, but primarily and chiefly to the influence of christianity, to which also indeed, in no inconsiderable degree, its superior civilization is to be attributed. But even in western Europe, the females of the highest rank are disposable property, as respects *giving* in marriage. In a matter so deeply interesting to their comfort and

happiness, there is denied them all liberty of choice. A royal maid is disposed of in marriage upon the principle of state-policy altogether, and she must accept the husband that is selected for her, or else draw down upon herself an intolerable weight of scorn and indignation. Moreover, among the several ranks of nobility, *giving* in marriage is conducted on a principle of calculation, rather than that of attachment. So that, in this interesting particular, the liberty of European females is in an inverse ratio to the rank of their families. The deplorable consequences are the same as might reasonably be expected ;—such as coldness, alienation, domestic feuds, and conjugal infidelity, so common and notorious among those high-born ladies that had been given in marriage contrary to their own wishes.

Nor does it by any means follow, on the other hand, that paternal authority has no concern in this matter. It has indeed a deep concern, but it is rather negative than injunctive. A father has an undoubted right, nay he is in duty bound to refuse consent to an alliance which he thinks would be deeply prejudicial to the interests of his child, and to use all proper means in his power to prevent it.\* So far is this from cruelty, that it is a mark of affection, and an act of kindness. But if he overleaps this boundary ; if he assumes the right of selection ; if he attempts to give his daughter in marriage against her own inclination ; if he would sacrifice her peace to the mammon of avarice or to the moloch of ambition :—it is *then* that he acts the part of a tyrant, and is deserving of severity of censure.

Such instances, however, do seldom happen in common life ; in which there is a manifold greater number

\* I have particular reference here to children, either in the state of minority, or not of an age fully mature.

of children who rush into the state of marriage with a criminal disregard to parental authority and feeling, than of parents who abuse their authority in the manner above mentioned.

It may perhaps be not impertinent to add here, that *Giving* in marriage implies *Asking*—at least for the most part. But not to touch upon this ticklish point myself, I will do the reader better justice by a quotation.

The author of a late work of great merit, entitled, “*Journal of a tour and Residence in Great Britain, during the years 1810 and 1811, by a French Traveller,*” gives the following lively description of one of the pictures on domestic subjects, which he saw in London.

“ You see a room occupied by a shoemaker and his family. He is at work, seated on a bench in the front of the picture ; shirt sleeves tucked up,—squared elbows,—a shoe in one hand, on his closed knees,—a hammer in the other, hard at work ; his son by him, his back turned, works at the same trade. Behind them, at a table, the mother shells beans ; the daughter, seated at the same table, is binding shoes. A child in a low chair, a bowl in his hand, eating carelessly, as if he had enough, and playing with the cat. In the middle of all this the door opens ; a young man in his holiday dress, with a nose-gay at his button-hole, hat off, and scratching his head, with an awkward embarrassed air, advances a few steps, and is about to tell the object of his visit. The father stops short in the middle of his work, and half raising his head, shows a wrinkled forehead,—care worn—a sharp and impatient eye,—and, altogether, a countenance ill calculated to encourage the gallant. The girl, without interrupting her work, but deeply blushing, uneasy, and anxious, casts a side-

glance at what is going on. The mother looks complacently, and the young brother laughs in his sleeve with suppressed archness, while the child continues playing with the cat, without taking any concern with the scene, which is called, as may be imagined, *The Asking in Marriage.*"

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## NUMBER XCI.

*Of useful industry, considered as a moral duty.*

THE fourth commandment in the sacred decalogue lays upon us two distinct obligations : it imposes labour no less expressly than it enjoins a holy rest. "*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.*"

Hence, it is a just and fair inference, that a life of voluntary idleness is a life of disobedience to the law and will of heaven. If, of your own choice you spend the six working days idly, you are as verily a transgressor of the moral law, as you would be in disregarding the day that is consecrated. And besides, we are the better fitted for the duties of the sabbath, by means of our industry in "*providing things honest*" during the rest of the week ; whilst, on the other hand, he that idles away the six days of labour, is very ill prepared for the sacred day of rest. The idle body, who, nevertheless, appears occasionally devout, separates what God hath joined together, for he that said, "*Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy,*" hath also said, "*Six days shalt thou labour.*"

Well-directed industry, is a moral and christian duty ; a scriptural duty, which none that are capable of it can dispense with, and be guiltless. Neither wealth,

nor rank, nor sex, can excuse a person in good health, and of competent faculties, from all and every kind of useful labour, either of body or mind, or of both. Mere amusement is for little children. Employment, useful employment, is for men and women. And, indeed, as little is there granted us the liberty of doing no good at all with our faculties, as of employing them in doing evil and mischief.

Labour is either mental, or bodily, or mixed. There are none whose labour is a greater “ weariness of the flesh,” as well as of the nobler part of humanity, than men of close and remitless study ; and there are none, whose industry is more useful to mankind. The man of parts, who, in solitude, and peradventure in neglected poverty, employs discreetly, the faculties of his mind, to enlighten and instruct his fellow beings in their immortal, or even their mortal interests, is a benefactor to community, rather than a burthen. Nevertheless, he, even *he*, errs woefully, if he neglects to exercise his body. It is lamentable to see, how many men of study, how many promising youths, waste away their strength, impair their constitutions, and bring upon themselves incurable diseases and premature death, solely for the want of a proper mixture of bodily exercise with the strenuous labours of their minds.

In the proud and queasy times in which we live, manual labour of the *useful* kind is accounted a thing too vulgar for those of the better sort. Many a young gentleman would feel himself dishonoured by doing any thing called *work* ; and many a young lady would blush to be found employed in an occupation really useful ; even though in circumstances imperiously demanding their industry.

In this respect, the manners of society have suffered

a deplorable change. The time was, when labour was held in honour among even the rich and the noble ; when even ladies of the highest fortune and rank thought it not beneath them to work occasionally with their hands.

Near the conclusion of the last century but one, Queen Mary of England, who was joint sovereign with her husband the heroic William the Third, “ used frequently,” as history informs us, “ to employ some part of her time in needle work ; appointing one or other of her maids of honour to read something lively as well as instructive, to her, and to the rest, whilst they were busy with their needles.”

The age next preceding that of Mary, furnishes at least one example in high life, that is still more remarkable. Sir Walter Raleigh, lodging at the house of a noble Duke, early in the morning overheard the Duchess enquiring of her servants if the pigs had been fed ; and, with a significant smile, asking her, as he was going to the table, if her pigs had had their breakfast ; she archly replied, “ They have all been fed except the strange pig that I am now about to feed.”

The man, who, of all the American worthies, was “ first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” was no less remarkable for industry than for his wisdom and integrity.

One of the biographers of Washington, remarks of him, “ his industry was unremitted, and his method so exact, that all the complicated business of his military command, and civil administration, was managed without confusion, and without hurry. It was the assemblage of these traits of character, so early visible in him, that recommended him when scarcely more than

a boy, to an embassy of no ordinary importance, hazardous, and difficult."\*\*

Happy were it if the youths of America, would, in this respect, copy after the example of one whose memory they so delight to honour.

Few things are impossible to industry skilfully directed. By it, men of but middling talents rise sometimes to deserved eminence ; by it the man of "small things" expands himself by little and little, till he comes at last to occupy a respectable space in society ; and by it the face of the living world is illumined and gladdened. What difficulties have been overcome ; what wonders have been wrought ; and what immense benefits have been procured, by the industrious application of the mental and corporeal powers of man !

On the other hand, no gifts of nature, or of fortune, can supersede the necessity for industry. Sloth is a rust, that eats up the finest ingredients of genius, and mars and consumes the greatest of fortunes. He that is slothful of mind, loseth his mind : instead of enlarging, it contracts and diminishes as he increases in years. He that is slothful in business, will at last have neither business to do, nor any thing to sustain his declining age. In short, a downright slug, whether in high life or low, *vegetates*, rather than *lives*.

\* Bancroft's Life of Washington.

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## NUMBER XCII.

*Of the moral use of the Pillow—with reflections on Sleep.*

"CONSULT THY PILLOW."—This short counsel contains "more than meets the eye." The pillow is the

close friend of meditation, of serious thoughtfulness, and of freedom of conscience—in so far as it gives that faithful inmate the best of opportunities for administering wholesome reproof.

*The day is thine ; the night also is thine :—*and with the like graciousness are they both given, the one for labour, and the other for rest—nor yet for rest alone, but also for a sober survey of past life, and more particularly of the day that had fleeted last. The mantle of darkness, which hides exterior objects, turns the busy mind upon itself, willingly or unwillingly, according to its moral frame and habits.

Human greatness, that lords it by day, is not at all exempt from stern admonishment on the pillow. *There*, no longer able to show off splendor and prowess, its pride is not flattered, nor its feelings spared. Ahasuerus, for example, the richest, the most splendid, and the most puissant of all the monarchs of the East—reigning from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces ;—this Ahasuerus laid him down upon his bed of gold, in a spacious room supported by pillars of marble, and adorned with white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings. Thus he laid him down, amid an unrivalled profusion of eastern magnificence—but on that night, could not the king sleep. The world else was asleep. The man servant and the maid servant, the meanest of slaves, the veriest wretches in the whole realm, were fast asleep.—And could not the lord and master of them all, the monarch in the palace of Shushan—could not *he* woo slumber to his eyelids ? Alas, no ! It turned, however, to good. Of necessity, rather than choice, the luxurious and effeminate despot, to relieve him from sore restlessness, be-thought himself of improving the wearisome vigils of

the night in looking into the affairs of his government. He called for the reading of the book of the records of the chronicles ; and finding that an upright and excellent servant, to whom he owed his life, had been utterly neglected, he ordered him a bounteous reward.—A righteous deed, which never, in any probability, would he have done, had he not *consulted his pillow*.

It is upon the pillow, that *the book of the records of the chronicles*, is most frequently set before the eyes of those mortals, who sadly mispend their time, and abuse the high privileges of their nature. Conscience presents the *handwriting*, and there is no such thing as turning their eyes away from it. In vain they turn, and toss themselves, on this side, and on that, longing for sleep ; *the records of the chronicles*, are still full in their view—and they are fain to make vows and solemn promises, too often unheeded on the morrow.

Projects of too great hazard—plans of a questionable nature and doubtful issue—resolutions taken up of a sudden, and without being duly weighed :—these, engendered by the fever of the day, are abandoned, or rectified, upon coolly consulting the pillow. So that many a one has risen up in the morning, with more reasonable sentiments and views respecting his personal affairs, than those with which he had lain down. And many a one, also, by consulting the pillow, has cooled hot resentments, and abandoned purposes of revenge.

In consulting the pillow, one thing especially is to be ever kept in practical remembrance ; and that is, to offer up the silent adorations of the heart, both at the instant of falling asleep, and at the moment of awaking. “ *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep : for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety.—I laid me down and slept ; I awaked ; for the Lord sustained me.*”

And what art thou, *Sleep*? Of what *stuff* art thou made? Whence comest thou when thou visitest our pillows, and whither goest thou, when, ceasing to press gently our eye-lids, thou art borne away upon the wings of the morning? Thou incomprehensible *Something*—thou invisible solace of heavy laden man—should one gain the whole world in exchange for thee, how pre-eminently miserable would be that one!

“The great cordial of nature is sleep. He that can sleep soundly, takes the cordial; and it matters not, whether it be on a soft bed, or on the hard boards. It is sleep only that is the thing necessary.” This sovereign cordial, so often denied to worldly prosperity and grandeur, is, for the most part, bountifully furnished to those in circumstances most deplorable and forlorn.

Behold the wretchedest of the wretched—a captive and slave to the wild Arabs. Day after day he suffers with hunger, with thirst, with fatigue, with terror,—the very utmost that human nature is capable of enduring:—night after night he reposes in sound sleep, nor is ever disturbed with even a *single unpleasant dream*, though stretched upon the bare ground, and in the bleak and open air, or lodged amidst the noisomeness of dungeon filth.\*

*Perhaps*, of all the immense percipient beings, above as well as below us, there is only ONE, who neither slumbers nor sleepeth—from that ONE, cometh the inestimable gift of quiet sleep.

Next to the goads of a guilty conscience, the principal banishers, or rather *murderers*, of sleep, are these—**Luxury, Dissipation, Ambition, Avarice, Envy, Mal-**

\* I here allude to certain passages in the recently published Narrative of Captain Judah Paddock:—a man, whose habits of strictest veracity are well known to all his acquaintances.

ice, together with whatever other of the family of the malignant passions. “O miserable of happy”—more especially upon their pillows—are many, very many, of those, whom the world deems the happiest of men and women !

On the contrary, next to pureness of conscience and soundness of health, the most successful wooers of Sweet Sleep, are Temperance, useful Labour, Benevolence, Resignation, Gratitude for the good that Providence bestows.

It is obvious to remark, that Intemperance in sleeping is to be guarded against, as well as Intemperance in eating and drinking. This *cordial of nature*, should be used as a cordial. The habit of over-sleeping weakens the frame both of body and mind : and besides this, is a clear loss of precious and invaluable time. Only the space of two hours in the twenty-four, if redeemed from unnecessary sleep, to what vast account might it not be turned in the course of twenty years !

Once more ; Sleep has, in several respects, so near a resemblance to Death, that the relation in the *Paradise Lost*, of the conceptions of Adam when falling into his first slumber, has no less of nature than of beauty.

“ On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,  
Pensive I sat me down : there gentle sleep  
First found me, and with soft oppression seiz’d  
My drowsed sense, untroubled, though I thought  
I then was passing to my former state  
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve.”

As a counterpart to which, I will quote another christian poet—the admirable Montgomery.

“ There is a calm for those who weep,  
A rest for weary pilgrims found ;  
And while the mouldering ashes sleep  
Low in the ground ;

The soul, of origin divine,  
God’s glorious image, freed from clay,  
In heaven’s eternal sphere shall shine,  
A star of day !

## NUMBER XCIII.

*Of the two opposite errors—the extreme of suspicion and the extreme of confidence.*

MANKIND are alike betrayed by the excess of suspicion, and of confidence. The maxim, that in suspicion is safety, is true only in a qualified sense ; for overmuch suspicion errs as often as overmuch confidence. As to believe nothing, would be quite as wrong as to believe every thing ; so, to trust no body, is no less an error than to trust every body. Indeed it is the worse error of the two, because there is more evil in causelessly thinking ill, than in causelessly thinking well of our fellow beings.

Bad men, who look chiefly into themselves for information concerning the human kind, are ready to believe the worst of others. Conscious of their own insincerity, they can hardly think that any speak friendly to them or act kindly toward them, with intentions that are really sincere. They suspect religion to be hypocrisy, and that apparent virtue is but a mask to conceal the naughtiness of the heart. Piety, self-government, munificence, and all the charities of life, they impute to corrupt, or interested motives. Hence they repose firm confidence scarcely in any one. Now, as to persons of this cast, they are not only the dupes of their own jealousy, but the victims. A suspicion of every body they have to do with, as it keeps them in perpetual fear and disquietude, and prevents their enjoying the common comforts and benefits of society, so it precludes all likelihood, and almost all possibility, of self-amendment. For their minds are too intent upon others' faults to attend to their own ; and besides,

their mistrusting ill of all about them, furnishes a powerful opiate to their own consciences.

It has been boasted by some men of business, that they never in all their lifetime suffered by imposition or imposture ; that they had always accustomed themselves to keep so sharp an eye upon mankind that no body could cheat or deceive them. This is not, however, any great matter of boasting ; for it is scarcely possible they should have been so constantly upon their guard against deception, if they had not had a vigilant monitor and prompter in their own hearts. Upon the same ground, it is an ill mark in any one, to decry apparent virtue in others, and assign bad motives to their good deeds ; since it argues that the only motives that can fall within the ken of his own mental eye are generally faulty, if not totally corrupt. In short, it is better now and then to be deceived, and even duped, than never to confide.

On the contrary, persons, of honest, benevolent views, are apt, from that very circumstance, to run into the opposite extreme. Conscious of their own uprightness and probity, they are hard to suspect that any who wear the semblance of these virtues should have it in their hearts to beguile them ; and, of course, for want of prudent caution, are peculiarly liable, through an amiable weakness, to be ensnared, and sometimes desperately injured. It is especially in youth that we find this error : which is commonly cured by time and experience. An unsuspecting youth, soured by bitter experience, may become too suspicious in old age ; whilst a youth of an excessive jealousy of temper, commonly grows more jealous or suspicious as he advances in years.

There are two classes of men who are often betrayed by an excess of confidence : these are creditors and

debtors. As it respects the former, the remark is too obvious to need proof or illustration. The error of giving indiscriminate credit, is too visible in its deplorable consequences not to be generally seen. But the opposite error, that is, the error of *taking* too large credit, is not quite so manifest, though equally fatal.

As the creditor trusts the debtor, so, on the other hand, does the debtor trust the creditor, except in instances in which he is morally certain of making punctual payment. If one runs in debt beyond his ability to pay in good season, he has to trust to the mercy of his creditor, not merely as to his house and land, goods and chattels, but even for the liberty of going at large. The creditor has a mastery over his personal liberty, as well as over his property. If he exact the last farthing of the debt the very instant it becomes due, and that notwithstanding the plea of inability, he may perhaps be called hard and unfeeling, but not unjust. The promise in the note or bond, entitles him to be thus rigorous, and the law is on his side. Neither is any debtor entitled, ordinarily, to expect any thing short of this rigour from his creditor, except on principles of compassion: and surely it evinces too much of confidence, as well as too little of spirit, for one to place himself, unnecessarily, in circumstances to need the compassion of fellow man as his only earthly resource.

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#### NUMBER XCIV.

*Of sunshine friends.*

AN ancient naturalist tells us, that the rats will leave a house which is about to fall.

But whether it be so or not, there is in some human

animals a sort of instinct very nearly like it :—they are your sunshine-friends, who stick to you closely in prosperity ; but no sooner do they perceive a bleak storm of adversity hover over you, than they estrange themselves and stand aloof.

Nor is this an upstart race of modern origin. Contrariwise, we find it distinctly noted and described in writings of early antiquity ; but in none more admirably than in the following passages of the Son of Sirach :—“ For” (says that skilful remarker on mankind) “ some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend, who, being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach. Again, some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thy affliction. But in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants. If thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face.” So also, in another part of his admirable book, the same writer further describes this sort of gentry :—“ If thou be for his profit, he will use thee : but if thou have nothing, he will forsake thee. If thou have any thing, he will live with thee : yea, he will make thee bare, and will not be sorry for it. If he have need of thee, he will deceive thee, and smile upon thee, and put thee in hope ; he will speak fair, and say, What wantest thou ? He will shame thee by his meats, until he have drawn thee dry twice or thrice, and at the last he will laugh thee to scorn : afterward when he seeth thee, he will forsake thee, and shake his head at thee.”\*

The common saying, *Prosperity makes friends*, is admissible only in a qualified sense. Most of the friends of prosperity’s making scarcely deserve the name ; for

\* Ecclesiasticus, 6th and 13th chapters.

no sooner do they perceive your fortune falling, than they make off with themselves, like the rats from a falling house.

To exemplify this truth, instances almost without number might be drawn from history ancient and modern, sacred and profane. But narrowing the subject to a single point, my object will be the rectification of a very prevalent error, namely, the idle notion of attracting regard by a style of living too expensive for our condition.

Nothing more distinctly marks the age and the country we live in, than this species of folly. If the former days were not better than these in other respects, yet in this one respect they were a great deal better : they were times of sober, prudent economy. Poverty was not arrayed in costly attire ; mediocrity did not ape the splendor and expense of wealth ; industry was coupled with frugality ; the great bulk of the yeomanry were plain in their living, and accustomed their children to plainness of food, and raiment ; the trader made it a point to win gold ere he wore it ; it was fashionable for families to live within their incomes : it was creditable to be provident and economical.

Marvellous is the change, which the short term of a single age has brought forth. *Now*, the general language of practice is, “ Away with the old-fashioned maxims of frugal economy, and up with the expenses of high life.” The distinctions of wealth are lost in the general blaze ; all being alike fine, all alike accustomed to sumptuous fare. The two extremes in society, to wit, Wealth and Pauperism, as it were meet together ; the middle class, of such magnitude and might in other times, having lost its distinctive marks of genealogy.

This ruinous course is entered upon, and obstinately persisted in, not unfrequently in the full view of some

of its baleful consequences. It needs very little of arithmetic to calculate how it will end. The youth must know that if, in his days of health and vigour, he spends all as he goes, he will, in the seasons of sickness and decrepit age, be a forlorn dependant upon charity. All must needs know the inevitable effects produced by the outgoes exceeding the incomes.

But as an offset to the disadvantages of embarrassment, poverty, and debt, a great many, peradventure, are soothed with the idea that they are obtaining notice and regard, or, in other words, are making to themselves friends. In the estimate of their own imaginations, they do not *waste* their substance : they only *barter* it for honourable connection, for distinguished rank in society, for a close alliance with wealth and fashion, for obtaining ties upon the hearts of a large circle of respectable ladies and gentlemen. These they are confident, will never abjure their friendship, nor forsake them, come what will.

Alas ! too late are they undeceived. Too late are they taught by rueful experience, that *the companions at the table abide not when they are brought low*—that they are sooner forsaken by none, than those who had *lived upon them, and drawn them dry*—that these flesh-pot friends are among the first to *laugh them to scorn, and to shake the head at them*. After squeezing the orange, they throw away the peel.

Harmanicus—I have known him well—Harmanicus, of proverbial hospitality, had made to himself an endless train of friends. His house was for all the world like a public inn, except that the customers had not a farthing to pay ;—a precious circumstance which gave it the decided preference. Far and near was Harmanicus known, and for his profuse liberality far and near was he admired. Fashion, and Wealth, and Rank,

did him the honor to eat of his “ savoury meats,” and drink of his delicious wines. The *itinerant* gentry neglected not to spend one night at least, both going out and coming in, with the liberal-hearted Harmanicus. Even Travellers and Sojourners on business, found time, nevertheless, to breakfast, and dine, and sup, and lodge, with Harmanicus, who provided withal “ both straw and provender.” The worshipful Bencher, for many years his close table-friend, never failed *to live with him* in term-time. They served themselves of him to the last. They eked out their friendly visits till they had milked all his resources dry ; till poorly, poor man, was he able barely to shift for himself :—and then—What *then*?—Read the son of Sirach for an answer.

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## NUMBER XCV.

*Of the misusage of the faculty of Memory.*

IN the little citadel of the mind, the *Memory* acts as a sort of subaltern ; and hence it is often blamed, and sometimes wrongfully, by the commander in chief. We seldom find men dissatisfied with their understandings, or their judgments, or with the character of their hearts. Very few are disposed to own that any of these are radically defective or greatly in fault. But nothing is more common than to hear them berating their memories, as not only weak, but treacherous. The aged I have often heard complain of their memories, but seldom of their judgments.

“ Tis with our judgments as our watches—none  
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.”

I said just now, that the memory sometimes is blamed wrongfully ; and truth would bear me out, were I to add, that nothing is more common than taxing the memory with faults of which it is in no wise guilty.—In very many of the cases in which forgetfulness is pleaded for excuse or apology ; if the memory were allowed to speak for herself, she would let it be known that the imputations cast upon her were slanderous falsehoods, and that, in these particular cases, she had performed her part in full measure.

Artificial methods of assisting the memory have been suggested by writers, and at least one invention for that purpose has been made and put in practice by those who could not write. It is worthy of notice as a curiosity, if not for its use.

According to Smith's history of the colony of New-York—In 1689 Commissioners from Boston, Plymouth, and Connecticut, had a conference with the Five Indian nations at Albany : when a Mohawk sachem, in a speech of great length, answered the message of the commissioners, and repeated all that had been said the preceding day. The art they had for assisting their memories was this. The sachem who presided had a bundle of sticks prepared for the purpose, and at the close of every principal article of the message delivered to them, he gave a stick to another sachem, charging him with the remembrance of that particular article. By this means, the orator, after a previous conference with the sachems who severally had the sticks, was prepared to repeat every part of the message, and to give to it its proper reply. This custom, as the historian remarks, was invariably pursued in all their public treaties.

The gift of memory, like the other gifts of nature, is distributed, to some individuals more, and to others

less. While all are blest with such a measure of memory as might suffice them, if well improved, some few enjoy it in an extraordinary measure; and, what is truly wonderful, a very strong memory is sometimes found yoked with a very feeble intellect. There are some persons that can repeat, word for word, a considerably long discourse, upon hearing or reading it only once or twice, and yet are possessed of minds too weak and slender to reason upon matters with any considerable degree of ability, or to judge of them accurately. A man of this sort, ever makes himself tiresome, if not ridiculous, by dealing out wares from the vast store of his memory, without regard to time, place, or fitness. But whenever, on the other hand, an excellent memory is united with a sound and vigorous understanding, nothing but indolence can hinder such a one from becoming great—nothing but the want of good principle at heart, can prevent his acting with superior excellence, some part or other, upon the theatre of life.

In general, we forget for want of attention, more than the want of memory. Persons of very indifferent memories find no difficulty in remembering certain things that had excited their attention in a very high degree; while a thousand other things of far greater moment have been utterly forgotten by them. Once on a time, an Indian preacher said to an assembly of white people who were gathered together to hear him—“Though you will forget what I say, you will remember as long as you live, that you had heard an Indian preach.”—It was even so. None of the assembly did probably forget this striking circumstance, though but few retained in memory either sermon or text.

“Creditors,” generally speaking, “have better memories than their debtors.” The former are never known to forget the *bond*; while the latter are very prone to

forget it, or at least to forget its *date*, or the day of promised payment.

The doer of a favour or benefit, is apt to remember it a great deal longer than the receiver.

It is one of the worst and most treacherous memories, that forgets a friend in his adversity. “ Pharaoh remembered not Joseph, but forgat him.” Nor is it a very uncommon thing, to forget, not only near friends, but eminent benefactors, when they stand in need of aid.

All of us inherit from nature better memories for injuries than for kindnesses. This lamentable error of memory it behooves us to remedy by all the means in our power.

A man of a truly great mind, who had been both obliged and disengaged by the same persons, magnanimously resolved to forget all that might diminish his gratitude, and to remember only what might increase it.

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## NUMBER XCVI.

### *A comment upon the fable of the Invisible Spectacles.*

“ JOVE, once upon a time,” (as an old heathen fable relates) “ having ordered that Pleasure and Pain should be mixed, in equal proportions, in every dose of human life, upon a complaint that some men endeavoured to separate what he had joined, and taking more than their share of the sweet, would leave all the sour for others ; commanded Mercury to put a stop to this evil, by placing upon each delinquent a pair of invisible Spectacles, which should change the appearance of things, mak-

ing pain look like pleasure, and pleasure like pain, labour like recreation, and recreation like labour."

If, by the *Invisible Spectacles* we are to understand the illusions which mislead the judgment in regard to the true comforts and interests of life, it is pretty certain that no kind of spectacles else is in so general use. In the days of youth almost every thing is seen through these false glasses, which very many wear all their life-time, in spite of age and experience.

One of the most needful of all arts, is the art of *computing*. It is deemed indispensably necessary in all kinds of business. And hence we send our children to school, to learn the use of figures, and how to cast up accounts, and foot them to a nicety. One who has no knowledge at all of the nine figures of arithmetic, who even knows not that 2 and 2 make four, is regarded as fit for no sort of business above that of a scullion. But besides the knowledge of figures, there is another branch of the art of computing, which is of superior importance : I mean an accurate knowledge of the value of things, considered in relation to our real comfort and happiness. This is a kind of knowledge, not in itself so very difficult to learn, but which, nevertheless, is hidden from multitudes of men and women of good natural parts, by reason that their manner is to view things through the medium as it were of magic spectacles, rather than with the naked and unprejudiced eye of reason.

Apart from considering the common and fatal illusion, through which immortal joys are sacrificed to transient pleasure, a great many, for want of skill in the art of computing, make wrong judgments about *Pleasure*, on the right choice of which their worldly weal depends in no inconsiderable measure. Scorning, or overlooking, the simple and innocent pleasures of

life which are given in common to human beings, which no arts of refinement can considerably increase, and which excess never fails to embitter ; they lose the good they have, by their perpetual hankerings after some unattainable state of earthly felicity. Pursuing pleasure with eagerness, and as an employment, they purchase pain ; and that, at the expense of fortune, health, character, and peace of mind. At this dear rate they purchase the most grievous of pain, to wit, that of satiety, which consists in loathing life and its enjoyments. He that is not man enough to govern his appetites, cannot make himself brute enough to indulge and pamper them without remorse ; and therefore, in the very circumstance in which he places his chief good, he is far less happy than some of the irrational animals around him.

But to return to the fabulous spectacles : it may be taken for certain that, though invisible, they are actually worn by all persons belonging to any of the following classes.

*They* certainly wear them, who fondly hope to find happiness in a life devoted to idleness and an unrestrained indulgence of passion and appetite. With respect to their true good, as relates even to this life alone, they are under a deplorable mistake. For it is an axiom built upon irrefragable experience, that if mere corporeal gratification were intended to be the main object of our pursuits, yet, even then, with regard to real enjoyment, industry would be preferable to sloth, and temperance to excess.

*They* wear them, who incessantly moil and toil, are hard dealers, illiberal, uncharitable, incompassionate to the poor ; and all for the sake of hoarding up treasure for their children. Blind infatuation ! Often, very

often, it happens, that such hoards are squandered in a much shorter time than it took to gather them.

*They* wear them, who, though possessing a competence, fret their hearts and embitter their lives with covetings after riches. Were they to view things in a true light, they would be thankful, rather than discontented and querulous ; since their condition is precisely that which is best calculated to furnish the greatest amount of genuine earthly comfort.

*They* wear them, who sacrifice realities to appearances, substantial comforts to airy notions, who had rather *feel* misery than not *seem* happy, who impoverish and beggar themselves for the sake of appearing more prosperous and felicitous than those of the common sort. The folly of such people's calculations is seen by every body but themselves.

*They* wear them, who lay the scenes of their happiness abroad rather than at home. It is a certain truth, that one who lives on uneasy terms with himself can find very little enjoyment in extrinsic objects. So that the very first step in the road to solid happiness, is the acquirement of a contented mind ; because without a disposition to contentment, any change of place, or of outward condition, is only the exchange of one sort of disquietude for another. And as the spring of happiness is found in our own minds, or no where ; so, "well-ordered *Home*" is the true centre of its enjoyment. Mothers, whose chief satisfaction lies in circles of fashion and scenes of amusement, have their vision woefully distorted by means of the magic spectacles. Else they would clearly see that the occupation of nursing, rearing, and instructing their infant progeny, is what furnishes the sweetest of pleasures, at the same time that it is one of the first of duties.

## NUMBER XCVII.

*Of the misuse, and the proper use, of Reading.*

“ Read not to contradict or confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider.”

LORD BACON.

THE age we live in has been remarkably a reading age. Books are more numerous and of more easy access, than at any former period; and the number of readers has increased astonishingly since the middle of the last century. In a general view, this is of good omen, for reading is one of the principal keys of knowledge: it unlocks as it were a *mine* of intellectual wealth, and contributes to its general diffusion. There is considerable reason to think, however, that the progress of real sound knowledge has not kept pace with the progress of reading: for the slow pace of the former in comparison to that of the latter, there being the several causes which here follow.

By reason of the abundance and super-abundance of books, the best are commonly read but superficially, and, by many, not read at all; the attentions of the reading public being distracted with such a boundless variety. If there were only one book in the world, and its copies so multiplied that it were in every one’s hands, almost every body would have it by heart. Or, if there were only a few books, and they accessible to all, those few would be pondered and studied till a considerable part of their contents were treasured up in the minds and memories of the generality of readers. But now that books are so numerous and innumerable, the readers skip from one to another without settling their attention upon any; so that many who are fairly entitled to the credit of great reading, are very little.

improved in their intellectual faculties. They greedily devour books, but duly appropriate scarce any thing of their contents ; like eaters that have a voracious appetite, but a bad digestion.

Besides this, with the bulk of the bookish tribe, reading is come to be an idle amusement, rather than a serious and laborious occupation. They read for pleasure, more than for profit. The acquirement of a fund of really useful knowledge scarcely comes within the scope of their object, which is mainly, to beguile the tedious hours by furnishing food for the imagination. And hence is it, that no books are so palatable, or so generally read, and with so much eagerness, as the lighter compositions which are fraught with amusement, but barren of sound instruction. A novel even of the lowest cast, finds more readers than a serious work of great merit.

Moreover, the perpetual influx of new books has occasioned a raging appetite for novelty of some kind or other, no matter what ; so that the attention of most readers is directed rather to what is new, than to what is valuable and excellent. This kind of curiosity is insatiable ; for the more it is fed, the more it craves. Old authors are neglected, because they are old, and new ones engross the attention, because they are new. The standard-compositions of former ages are cast aside as lumber ; while a new pretender, with less than a fourth part of their abilities, is sure to find a *momentary* welcome at least.

From these causes it happens, that a great deal of reading does by no means imply a great stock of valuable knowledge. On the contrary, it often leaves the mind empty of almost every thing but vanity ; none being more vain, nor more intolerable, than those who having learnt by rote a multitude of maxims and facts,

deal them out by the gross, on all occasions, and in all companies. The food they have derived from reading lies in their minds undigested, and while it occasions a preternatural tumour there, it gives neither growth nor strength. Their reading has scarcely brought into exercise any one of the intellectuals besides the memory, which has been loaded and kept in perpetual action, whilst their understandings and judgments remain dormant. They are proud that they have read so much, but have reason rather to be ashamed that they know so little.

One who would really profit by reading must take heed *what* he reads, and *how*.

The use of reading, is to render one more wise and virtuous, rather than more learned ; and that point is to be gained not so much from the quantity, as the quality of the books we peruse. No single individual has leisure enough, nor is any life long enough, for a thorough perusal of even the tenth part of the books now extant in the English language. A selection is therefore necessary, and much depends upon making it judiciously. An inconsiderable number of well chosen and well studied books, will enable one to make far greater advances in real knowledge, than lightly skimming over hundreds of volumes taken up indiscriminately.

In reading, attention is to be paid also to the *How*, as well as to the *What*. The proper object of reading is not merely to inform us of what others think, but also to furnish us with materials for thinking ourselves, or for the employ and exercise of our judgments and understandings, and of the whole of our intellectual and moral faculties. It is not enough that it supplies us with a multitude of facts ; for the knowledge of facts is valuable to us chiefly for the inferences that we ourselves may draw from them, or because they fur-

nish us with the means of exercising and exerting our own powers in the way of comparing, reasoning, and judging, and of drawing sound conclusions of the future from the past.

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## NUMBER XCVIII.

*Of excessive and indiscriminate Novel reading.*

THE age we live in may justly be called the age of Novels and of Novelists. This brotherhood and sisterhood of writers are of modern origin. If we except the Romancers of the middle ages—who, by the bye, however wild and extravagant they appear, are thought to exhibit pretty correct delineations of the coarseness, ferociousness, and brutality of the manners of their times—if we except those old romancers, there were few novelists of any note prior to about the middle of the last century. It was then that Fielding and Richardson and Smollet appeared before the public: an astonishing trio, whose brilliance of genius, command of language, and distinct insight into the feelings and passions of the human heart, enabled them to adorn their pages with fascinating charms.\* To the works of those geniuses there succeeded swarms of imitators of each sex, and of every grade, as well in Germany as Britain: so that the reading world, for the last thirty years has been inundated as it were with novels, of which every one finds readers.

\* It must be owned, however, and is deeply to be regretted, that many of the pages of Fielding and Smollet are not only deformed with ribaldry, but tend directly to countenance and encourage looseness of morals.

It is an obvious fact, that books of no other kind are read with so much eagerness by the American youth of both sexes, as novels, or narratives of feigned incidents, characters and scenery: for though they seldom tempt to a second reading, they as seldom fail of being read once. In this respect it makes very little difference whether a novel be the fruit of genius, or of hair-brained folly; whether it has the stamp of learning, or proceeds from the pen of conceited ignorance; whether it sketches real life, or outstrips the extravagance of Bedlam:—if the thing be but new, it is earnestly enquired for, and eagerly perused.

And where lies the harm? Not in the nature of this species of writing, for it is not censurable in itself. We have the highest of all authorities for the use of Parables: they have been made the vehicle for conveying moral truth in the most cogent and captivating, and at the same time the most inoffensive manner. Apologues and fables are worthy of praise rather than blame, if framed with ingenuity, and made of manifest tendency to promote good morals. And the like may be said of the species of writing that goes under the denomination of novels: it is not censurable as a species of composition, but as a species of composition that has been generally and deplorably perverted by misuse. It is not to be denied that a novel may be so fashioned by well-directed talent, as to blend amusement with instruction, entertainment with the moral improvement of the mind; nor is it to be affirmed that there are no instances of this happy combination: some there are, though comparatively few. But the harm of novel-reading, carried to the excess of extravagance to which the present age has carried it, lies partly at least in the following particulars, which my limits will allow me but barely to mention.

1. Passing over the baser sort of novels, or such as have a direct tendency to deprave the mind and the heart, it may be confidently affirmed that the greater part of the rest, though they profess to have a moral purpose, do in no measure inculcate pure *christian* morals, but those of a spurious kind: the standard of their morality being very little higher, if any, than that of the highest order of the pagan school.

2. There is always danger, especially as regards youth, of cultivating the imagination too much, and the more solid faculties of our nature too little; and it is of the nature of most novels to produce this effect: they expand and bloat the imagination without informing the understanding or maturing the judgment.

3. The pictures of life given in novels are not usually those of common, but of high life; and can be therefore of no practical use at all to persons who are not destined to move in the highest circles. On the other hand, they tend to sophisticate their manners as well as their morals; the manners of Dukes and Duchesses being widely remote from what *should be* the manners of plain men and women.

4. Novel-readers, unless gifted with a more than ordinary fund of sound sense, are prone to slide into a romantic habit of thinking, and to cherish extravagant expectations. Finding in the books they are most accustomed to, a series of preternatural events; astonishing effects produced without even a shadow of cause; persons suddenly raised, as by magic, from humble circumstances to boundless opulence and loftiness of rank:—finding in the books which they ponder by day and through the vigils of the night, a perpetual recurrence of such unearthly scenery described in glowing language; it is no wonder that they cherish preposterous hopes; nor is it a wonder if they become disgusted

with the homely scenes and occupations of ordinary life, and look with contempt upon every situation, enjoyment, or connection, that is actually attainable by them.

5. If novels have the good effect of beguiling the young into a passion for reading, they have also, not unfrequently, the bad effect of so enervating their minds that there is left them neither industry nor relish for sober history, nor for any thing else that requires the labour of their understandings and judgments.

6. This kind of reading has a tendency to vitiate the taste, as well in regard to style as sentiment. The readers of novels—they who read them indiscriminately or without selection—are accustomed to a style nauseously sweet, or vapidly towering; consisting of spangled heaps of words and images which smother the sense, where sense there is. Thus accustomed, their feelings are no less repugnant to plain sober language, than to plain sober sense.\*

It does by no means follow from what has here been said, that parents and instructors should lay their children under an absolute interdiction with respect to their perusing novels. For, not to mention that such

\* Perhaps no single circumstance contributed so much to that general and deep corruption of our language, which began many years ago, and from which it is now considerably purified,—as the influence of the novellists of the last age. One of them—one of the sisterhood—commenced her novel as here follows:—“ *The setting sun’s resplendent glories tipt with dazzling lustre Etna’s lofty summits, and danced in a thousand varied hues over Polycrasto’s smooth, transparent bosom. The gentle zephyrs breathed Sicilian odours, and wafted on their silken wings the finest strains of Italian melody.*”—And in this honied strain the fair one proceeded on, casting abroad her nosegays at every step. Indeed I well remember when a style like this, was regarded by our reading youths with rapturous admiration and delight.

is the texture of our general nature that prohibition has a stimulating power, so that if a book never so worthless, were prohibited by law, almost every body would wish to read it;—there are, no doubt, some novels, which might be put into the hands of the young with safety, and to their real advantage. The danger lies in reading them indiscriminately or without selection, and in making them a principal part of reading.—“ Those novels which paint the manners and character of the body of mankind, and affect the reader with the relation of misfortunes which may befall himself,” may be perused, now and then, not only as an amusement, but as a profitable study;—yet, after all, it is *real* life with which we must chiefly have to do.

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## NUMBER XCIX.

*Of the impassable and unalterable limits to the pleasures of Sense.*

THE pleasures of sense, common to all animal natures, can admit of very little increase by the refinements of art, and at the same time are bounded and limited by impassable barriers. I say *impassable* barriers, for you no sooner have overleaped them than the pleasure is gone, and satiety, disgust, or some kind or other of painful dissatisfaction, succeeds to its place.

Sweet as is the light, too much of it would instantly destroy the organ of vision. Pleasant as it is to see the sun, yet looking steadfastly upon him in his meridian glory, would cause pain, and even blindness. The light of that luminary, by which alone we see the innumerable objects that are visible to us, is *coloured*; else

our feeble organ of sight could endure it scarcely for a moment. For what if the whole sky, the whole earth, and every object above and around us, shone with the unmixed brightness of *uncoloured* light? In that case the light itself would become darkness, since every eye must instantly be blinded by it.

And as with light, so with hearing. A sound that is too strong and forcible, deafens the ear. Nay even the most sweet and harmonious sounds, when long continued, or very often repeated, become indifferent to the ear, if not tiresome.

In like manner the smell is sickened with perpetual fragrance, and the palate surfeited by overmuch sweetness.

Even the *joy*, of mere animal nature, when it exceeds the just bounds, becomes a disturber. Overmuch joy of this sort, is inquietude; it banishes quiet sleep as effectually as pungent grief.

Hence it falls out, agreeably to the established constitution of our nature, that scarcely any persons lead more unpleasant lives than those who pursue after pleasure with the most eagerness. And so it must needs be, because their over-eagerness of desire, by spurring them on to perpetual excess, turns their pleasures to pains, and their very recreations to scenes of wearisome drudgery.

If Solomon had not told us from his own experience, that such a course of life is not only vanity, but vexation of spirit; yet the world abounds with instances to prove and illustrate it:—and of these I will now cite two eminent ones of the last age.

Richard Nash, Esq.—commonly called Beau Nash—who died, 1781, aged 87, was Master of the Ceremonies, or *King of Bath*, for the space of nearly half a century. His body was athletic, his constitution strong

and healthy, and his ruling passions were vanity, and keenness of desire for fashionable dissipation. To his darling wishes the means of indulgence exactly and altogether corresponded. Presiding over the amusements of the courtiers and nobility and gentry of England, he gratified his vanity with the finery and costliness of his apparel, and the implicit obedience paid to his orders ; and whilst employed in providing banquets of pleasure for his voluptuous guests, he seldom neglected his opportunities of carving plenteously for himself.—Beau Nash, enjoyed what is called *pleasure*, for a greater length of time, and refined upon it more exquisitely, than perhaps any man else that is now among the living or the dead. Yet, setting aside all the awful considerations of futurity, no one that reads the story of his life with any degree of sound reflection, will be led to think that he had more real enjoyment of it, or even near so much, as falls to the ordinary lot of mankind. A biographer of Nash, in speaking of the latter stages of his life, observes: “ He was now past the period of giving or receiving pleasure, for he was poor, old and peevish ; yet still he was incapable of turning from his former manner of life to pursue happiness. The old man endeavoured to practise the follies of the boy ; and he seemed willing to find lost appetite among the scenes where he was once young.”

A remarkable counterpart to the life of Mr. Nash, is that of Mademoiselle de Lespenasse ; which clearly shows that the most unhappy of women are those who have no taste for simple domestic comforts.

It is related of this most accomplished French lady, who had been the unrivalled leader of the fashion in France, during a part of the last century, “ That she not only lived, but almost died, in public ; that while she was tortured with disease, and her heart so torn

with agonizing passions as frequently to turn her thoughts on suicide, she dined out and made visits every day; and that, when she was visibly within a few weeks of her end, and was wasted with coughs and with spasms, she still had her saloon filled twice a day with company, and dragged herself out to supper with all the Countesses of her acquaintance."

To be *Temperate in all things*, is as really a matter of interest as of duty. If there were even no unlawfulness in excess, nor any punishment following it in the coming world, yet it ever brings with it a punishment here; a punishment that more than countervails the enjoyment. And, on the other hand, if there were neither virtue nor duty in the moderation of enjoying the pleasures of sense, yet it carries along with it its own reward, as it is the only way of deriving from those pleasures all the satisfaction which it is of their nature to give. So that, to enjoy innocently and in strict conformity to the rules of reason and of our holy religion, terminates ordinarily in a greater amount of real pleasure than is to be found by the epicure or the voluptuary.

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## NUMBER C.

*Of the difference between ignorance as respects learning, and a natural weakness of understanding.*

ALTHOUGH ignorance and foolishness are near akin, there is, nevertheless, a material difference between them: the former consisting in the destitution of what is called learning; and the latter in narrowness or weakness of the understanding.

Some ignorant men, or in other words, some men of little or no learning, manifest strength of memory, clearness of conception, and soundness of judgment ; and, within the narrow compass of their own observation, their remarks are just, and sometimes profound. Though not capable of reasoning exactly according to the rules of logic, yet they do reason conclusively, and, not unfrequently, by a native plainness and directness of understanding, they reach the point the shortest way. In defiance of bad grammar and uncouth phraseology, there is discoverable in them a *mine* of intellectual ore, which, had it been properly worked and refined, might have enriched and adorned society.

On the other hand, some learned men are foolish after all. When a strong memory is coupled with a weak understanding, (which is a union neither impossible nor quite uncommon,)—in such a case, though a great deal of learning is attainable, the possessor is not much the wiser for it ; and as to the unfortunate wights who are constrained to keep him company, they are rather plagued than profited by his learning. He is incessantly throwing it in their faces, and gorging them with it even to surfeiting. The garner of his memory is ample, and it is full ; every thing is there, but nothing in its right place : and having no faculty of discrimination, he more often brings out of his treasury, for use or for show, the wrong thing than the right. If you want of him only a string of *tape*, he measures you off whole yards of *brocade*. He must needs pour forth a flood of learning upon every thing, and to every body ; and he lectures upon literature and science, and quotes scrap after scrap from the ancients, without any regard to time, or place, or company.

In the course of the last age, one of this sort, name-

ced the manner in which, for a while, this "pestilence walketh in darkness," and then bursts forth into open light. The foul report is for some time communicated in whispers, accompanied with solemn injunctions of secrecy. Every one professes to hope it is not true, and yet every one whispers it to every one's acquaintance. If it be a young female that the story is about, one that is distinguished by some personal attractions; lo the rueful faces of the rival young sisterhood and their good mothers! Crumpling up their mouths while they are spreading it, and every now and then venting a deep sigh, they hope, forsooth, the thing is not quite so bad, but are sorely afraid there is too much truth in it. At length it comes to be a common report; a matter of public notoriety. It is in every body's mouth, and every body *must* believe it; because, according to one orthodox old saying, "What every body says, must be true;" and, according to another of equally sacred authority, "Where there is much smoke, there must be some fire." It is a settled point. In the public opinion, the case is decided, and the defamed party is cast. All are of one mind, that there must be something in it; though, here and there, one charitable body or another expresses a faint hope that the affair may not turn out to be quite so scandalous as it is represented.

Last of all, after the lapse of months, or perhaps of a year, it reaches the astounded ears of the person most immediately concerned. It is sifted, and turns out to be a sheer fabrication, invented and first put in circulation, by *Nobody*. Search is made in vain for the author, who lies snugly concealed amidst the multitude.

Well, then, the matter is cleared up, and all the slur is wiped away at least from the character of the defamed. Not exactly so, nor indeed can it be. Some are no less loath to disbelieve, than they were forward to believe. Some who pretend to be mighty glad at the

result, secretly wish it had turned out a little otherwise. Some have their doubts still, but charitably believe that, in the main, the poor girl “is more sinned against than sinning.” And some again, have no inclination to examine the disproof of the calumny, though they had swallowed it with a voracious appetite. “If she have cleared herself of the aspersion, it is well ; we wish the girl no harm : but, for our part, we have our own opinion about that matter, and leave it to others to think as they please.”—At the same time they look mighty wise, and not a little mysterious.

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## NUMBER CII.

*Of treating children with excessive severity.*

IN the excellent little tract of Dr. Cotton Mather’s, entitled, “Essays to do Good,” the venerable author lays down for himself the following rule in regard to his treatment of children : “*I will never use corporeal punishment except it be for an atrocious crime, or for a smaller fault obstinately persisted in.*” A maxim, which deserves to be written in golden characters, or rather, and far better, to be engraven upon the hearts of parents, and instructors of schools. Nor is it at all inconsistent with the maxim in Holy Writ, “*He that spareth the rod hateth his son.*” For, by no fair interpretation can this last be made to mean, that the discipline of the rod is necessary in any cases other than the aforementioned.

Obedience is the first lesson to be inculcated upon childhood. Ere it can discern between good and evil, the child should be taught to obey. Then it is that the task is comparatively easy, and may be effected by

a small measure of prudent enforcement. No restraint, however, should be imposed upon childhood but such as is salutary, and of obvious necessity. All and every needless restraint is tyrannous in its nature, and hurtful in its consequences. The child should be habituated to *passive* obedience, and at the same time be permitted to enjoy freedom of action in things indifferent;—to speak as a child, to act as a child,—to be lively and playsome as a child. One, whose childhood is closely held in trammels, whose merely childish things incur rebukes and frowns, is full likely to make a licentious use of freedom when it arrives, or else to be a mopus all his days.

Children should be carefully guarded against every species of useless vexation.

“Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” Lay upon them none but necessary and wholesome restrictions. Never cross them for the mere sake of showing your authority. Reclaim with a lenient hand their involuntary errors. Mark not against them, with a severe eye, their trivial abberations. Be no less ready to commend their well-doing, than to blame them for doing ill. Otherwise, the obedience paid you, will be uncheerful, constrained, and slavish. If you are of a fault-finding temper, you will occasion the very faults you seek after. Your children, out of despair of pleasing you, will become regardless both of your pleasure and displeasure, except in so far as they are influenced by servile fear.

As to stubbornness, or obstinate disobedience, “this *kind* goeth not out,” but by severe discipline. It must be mastered by blows if nothing else will do, and the earlier the better. But for the rest; mild and persuasive methods are far preferable.

Over young minds, the law of love might be made to have a much more powerful influence than penal law.

Much more easily are they drawn and guided by their affections, than driven by their fears ; the tenor of the former being spontaneous, steady, and uniform ; while the latter operate only by occasional excitement.

You have the fastest hold of the child that you hold by "the cords of love." By these cords you can draw him with ease. Delighting to please, and of course dreading to offend you, it is in your power to imprint in his mind indelible characters ; to weed out his wayward propensities ; to awaken his emulation ; to stimulate his industry ; and to mould him to sentiments and habits preparatory to excellence in after-life. But fear alone, is an unnatural and odious tie, which the child is ever desirous to break loose from. It stimulates indeed, but not in the manner to produce those ingenuous sentiments and feelings, which are the foundation of excellence in character.

Experience abundantly evinces, that infamous punishment has rather a pernicious, than a salutary effect, upon the minds of full grown persons. Few culprits, if any, were ever made better by means of the whipping-post and the stocks, or by cropping their ears, or infixing a brand of infamy upon the forehead or hand. Instead of being led to amendment by these means, they generally are made the more desperate and abandoned, by reason that they view their characters as irretrievably lost. So that, after having gone through one of these ordeals of shame, they ever after are utterly shameless.

Now it should be remembered, that children are as men and women in miniature ; possessed of the like passions, and particularly of the like feelings of honour and disgrace. Moreover, in children the most promising, these feelings are the most acute. They have a keen sensibility to shame, whereof a good use may be

made by prudent management ; but if this sensibility be put to hard proof, and that frequently, it becomes blunted, and their minds grow callous. And a child that is lost to shame, and to all self-respect, is in peculiar danger of being a lost child.

And besides, “ none are more unpitiful and cruel than those who have been bred up under the cruellest discipline, which seldom fails to blunt their feelings, and produce hardness of heart and ferociousness of temper. The cruellest of slave-drivers, are those that had been bred slaves, and had daily felt the smart of the lash. And, by parity of reason, children that are trained up under parents or governors who carry punishment beyond the bounds of kind correction into those of vengeance, and who delight to inflict such punishment as attaches infamy ; must needs possess more than a common measure of native amability, if, in the end, they turn out sweet tempered, humane, and of a nice sense of honour.

I will conclude with the words of the great Locke :— “ To break the spirits of children by too severe usage, is to them a greater injury than the opposite extreme of indulgence, for there is more hope, that a wild undisciplined spirit will become orderly, than of raising up one made abject and heartless by severity of discipline.”

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### NUMBER CIII.

*Of drawing and fixing the attention of children.*

THE great Locke, a man of almost unrivalled depth and acuteness of understanding, in his excellent trea-

tise of education, expresses himself as here follows :—  
“ He that has found a way how to keep up a child’s spirit easy, active, and free, and yet, at the same time, to restrain him from many things he has a mind to, and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him ; he, I say, that knows how to reconcile these seeming contradictions, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education.”

This is a sentiment of no ordinary importance. No less just than profound, it is entitled to the strict regard of parents, of preceptors, and of all who have the management of children.

The true power over children, is that of swaying their inclinations ; the power of withdrawing their inclinations from one direction, and settling them down in another. It is not hard words, nor hard blows, that can gain this point. The *will* is wrought upon by other methods. Of many examples which might go to illustrate this matter, I will adduce one, and a notable one.

Horatio Nelson, so famous in naval history, had at first an utter aversion to the sea ; for which, in no long time he came to be extravagantly fond. And what miracle, or magic, wrought this change in him ? It was wrought neither by miracle, nor by magic, but by a very natural process. The captain, who was his uncle, caressed the boy, treated him with familiarity and confidence, and not unfrequently consulted him as if he were a man, and his equal. This management enkindled in him the dormant sparks of genius and emulation, and changed as it were his inward frame. He was quite another boy. From diffident and sheepish, he at once became most active and enterprizing ; and from loathing the service, his whole inclination was bent upon excelling in it. Had his boyhood fallen into different hands, he might probably have turned out a very

different character. Nor would it perhaps be too much to assert, that the victory of the Nile, was an event in connection with the impressions made on the tender years of Nelson by captain Suckling.

In whatever you would learn children, the main thing is to bring their minds to it in good earnest ; after which, the rest is easy. In their play they are all alike active, because they all love it ; and so it would be as to their learning, if they could be once brought to love *that* as well as they love play. For it is generally, for want of attention, rather than of sufficient faculties, that children are dull to learn ; and in exciting and fixing their attention, the great art of the teacher lies.

Now the habit of attention, that is, attention of the genuine sort, is seldom, or never, wrought in them by operating merely upon their fears. The dread of pain might indeed force them on to the performance of their task, but still they would perform it *as* a task, and with any other feelings than those of delight : whereas the proper attention springs from a real delight in the thing they are about. This is wrought in them by awaking the more generous feelings of their nature—the love of esteem, and the desire of excelling. It is what requires skill, patient industry, and able management ; while, on the other hand, to make children attentive, after a sort, to their learning, by means of menaces and stripes, is a short, easy, and lazy method, requiring as little of trouble as of talent ; but always failing wofully short of the true mark.

And as in learning, so in whatever reputable and useful employment else, the young mind, by skilful management might be made to prefer it, and to take more pleasure in it, than in doing nothing. The busiest age is that of childhood. It is then they are most

inclined to be ever about something, and make it their chief delight to keep moving. This seems to furnish clear proof that industry is natural to our species ; in which case, education has little else to do than to give it a proper direction. Children, who, of their own accord, *play* with unwearable industry, might always perhaps, be induced to apply themselves, at the proper age, with the like spontaneous industry, to things of importance. But then, in order to it, their inclinations must be led, rather than forced. Play itself would presently become irksome and disgusting to children, if they were driven to it, and kept at it, by main force. And much less can you expect they will be diligent and active in business, unless you so prevail over their inclinations as that they chuse it of their own free will : a thing of no great difficulty, for the most part, if it be set about in season, and conducted with prudence.

There is a great difference between lumpish laziness, and frisky idleness. One who is too lazy to move himself about, is diseased in the very core, and there is no help for him. Of such, however, the number is small. Whereas, the numerous tribe of idlers, or of such as spend their time without profit to themselves or others, are generally, nevertheless, frivolously busy, and quite active in their own way ; and had they been tutored aright in their early years, their natural activity might have turned to excellent account.

## NUMBER CIV.

*Of balancing the principles of Hope and Fear in the governance of children.*

Hopes and fears are the great springs of human actions ; and though seemingly standing in opposition to one another, they jointly contribute to the accomplishment of the same ends. Hope that is altogether fearless, acts with rashness, or sinks into torpitude : but accompanied with fear, it is vigilant as well as diligent. On the other hand, fear unaccompanied with hope, is despair : and despair furnishes no stimulation at all to enterprize. It is by the due balancing of these two grand principles, Hope and Fear, that the human species is governed, and stimulated to actions tending to the preservation of the individuals, and to the general weal.

Our holy Religion itself, addresses alike our hopes and our fears. Every well principled and well-poised civil government, is calculated to operate upon each of these masterly principles of our nature. And it is with a nice regard to these universal and powerful principles, that *children* are to be governed and managed in families and schools.

It requires no inconsiderable skill in parents, as well as faithfulness, to qualify them for the all-important task of governing their children. Tacitus, the Roman historian, remarked of Agricola, that " he governed his family ; which many find a harder task than to govern a province." And why is this task so hard ? Not because it is altogether difficult of itself, but mainly because parental affection runs into error, one way or the other. On the one hand, we are blind to the faults of

our children, and spoil them by indulgence ; or on the other, from the desire of rearing our children to an ideal perfection and of exalting them above the condition of childhood and of human nature itself, we mark, in them, even the pettiest of trespasses, with a keenness of severity that chills their hopes, and either breaks their spirits, or renders them restless and refractory. The Golden Mean betwixt the extreme of indulgence and the extreme of rigor, is what few parents clearly discern and stedfastly pursue.

Preceptors or instructors of schools, are, for the time being, the foster parents of the children committed to their tutorage. And though they lack that yearning of affection that is felt by the real parent, they are, for this very reason, the less apt to swerve from the *golden mean* I just now mentioned ; provided they possess all the requisite qualifications for their business. These requisite qualifications are generally thought of easy attainment, and so indeed would they be if they consisted only in a competent measure of learning, along with rectitude of moral character : but all this, though absolutely needful, is quite insufficient of itself. Superadded to a competent ability to teach, there must be considerable skill in governing and managing a school ; otherwise, time and labour will be in a great measure lost.

An eminent degree of this kind of skill, is no less precious than rare. One who, besides possessing in full measure all the other requisites, is an adept in the science of managing a school ; who knows the avenues to the minds and hearts of his pupils ; who can seize alike upon their hopes, their fears, their emulation, and combine these jarring affections, and, as by mechanical force, can make them all minister together for improvement ; who has the faculty of encouraging the timid, of giving hope to the despondent, of repressing exuberant

vanity, of quickening the dull, and of teaching “ the young idea how to shoot” even in minds backward to learn :—an instructer thus gifted, and possessed withal, of excellence of moral character, together with a sincere affection for his pupils, and a fondness for his calling, is one of the most useful, and ought to be regarded as one of the most estimable, of human beings.

Whether in families or in schools there must needs be government, else the means of instruction will be employed in vain. In these little communities the government should be impartial and unwavering ; firm, but mild ; energetic, but not tyrannous.

There are some, whose manner toward their children varies in exact proportion to the variations of their own fickle tempers. When in a pleasant humour themselves, they indulge them in every thing ; when moody, and especially when downright angry, they will punish for almost nothing. This sort of government, if government it may be called, is nearly as bad as none : it tends alike to discourage, and to breed contempt.

Some seem to think that the sure way of gaining and keeping the affections of their children, is never to thwart their inclinations ; but experience sooner or later discovers to them their mistake. Children that have been treated with unlimited indulgence, often, very often, not only despise the counsels of their parents, but unfeelingly neglect their persons when destitute and needy ; the overweening indulgence given them, having soured their tempers and corrupted their hearts.

Others, running into the opposite error, apply their discipline altogether to the fears of their children, whom they unfortunately treat with stern and inflexible severity. They are feared indeed, but it is with a

hopeless, joyless, unaffectionate fear ; and by thus treating their children as if they were entirely base, they take the ready way to make them so.

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## NUMBER CV.

*Of Brevity in relation to sundry particulars.*

DR. COTTON MATHER, of venerated memory, in order to escape the calamity of tedious visits, wrote over the door of his study, in large letters, BE SHORT. A pithy sentence in truth it is, and well worthy of remembrance in a great many more cases than I can now enumerate.

The interchange of friendly visits is one of the most precious sweets of life. But then, it must not be overdone ; else it becomes irksome and disgusting. Hence, in the book of the Wise Man we meet with the following wholesome counsel, “ Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour’s house, lest he be weary of thee.” Now the necessary discipline of the *foot*, which is here inculcated, is, if I may presume to comment, of the following import :—Beware of spinning out your friendly visits beyond due length. Retire, if you perceive in hand any necessary business which your stay might interrupt ; retire, ere the family, after an hour’s yawning, begin to steal off, one by one, to bed ; retire, ere plain symptoms of weariness appear in the countenances of the little circle you are visiting ; retire, ere, in some undescribable manner or other, it be manifested that your room would be more welcome than your company. When you have made your friends glad by your coming, stay not so long as to make them still more glad by your going away.

In time long past, the lord of a manor in one of the neighboring states, is said to have had a way of his own to clear his house of visitors. When his tenants, to whom he was affable and courteous, seemed disposed to prolong the visits which they now and then made him, he dropped the Dutch tongue, and began speaking to them in English: whereupon the honest Dutchmen, knowing what was meant by the token, forthwith made off with themselves.

But the sage counsel, *BE SHORT*, applies not to visitors alone. It might be made of like precious use to ~~authors~~ and public speakers, ~~who~~ too often lack one valuable kind of knowledge, namely "that of discerning when to have done."

"'Tedium," as a writer of eminent abilities observes, "is the fault that most generally displeases: since it is a fault that is felt by all, and by all equally. You may offend your reader or hearer in one respect, and please him in another; but if you tire him out with your tediousness you give him unmixed disgust."

A book can do but little good if it be but little read: a destiny that befalls almost every book that is found to be unnecessarily prolix and bulky. This was the error of a former age. The massy folios of the last century but one, folios written by men of great parts and astonishing learning, have lain as lumber and been confined to the shelves of the curious, for no other reason than because every thread has been spun out to the greatest possible length. Whereas had the highly respectable authors, learned to *be short*, or given heed to the art of compressing their thoughts, they never would have wanted for readers.

Writers, sometimes, eke out their subject far beyond what need requires, from a mistaken ambition of mak-

ing a great book. But readers of the present age generally lean to the sentiment in the old Greek proverb, "*A great book is a great evil.*" It frightens them: they will scarcely open it, and much less set themselves to the task of reading it throughout.

Thus, in this respect it is with books as it is with money. As small change in quick and constant circulation, does more good than ingots of gold and silver hoarded up, so a small book that has a great many readers, is, if truly a good one, of much more benefit than a volume of enormous bulk, which, for that single reason is scarcely read at all. Nay, I will even venture to affirm, that the Bible itself would be much less read, and read with much less delight, were it one and indivisible. But the Bible, though bound together in one volume, is not a single book, but a collection of sixty-eight different books, all penned with brevity as well as with inimitable simplicity; and arresting the attention, alike by the weight of their matter and their engagingness of manner.

*Speak, young man, if there be need of thee, but be short*—is a monitory saying of the son of Sirach, which, together with the two following short sayings of that eminent sage—*Learn before thou speak*—*We may speak much and yet come short*—compose, all three, a pretty good recipe for young men of forward feelings, to carry about, and use on various occasions, and more especially to take along with them to Congress-Hall.

Speeches in the forum, pleas at the bar, and even sermons, when they are of immoderate length, seldom fail to be tiresome. So that public speakers consult their own credit as little as they do the feelings of their hearers, when they are more solicitous to say much, than that every thing they do say should be to the purpose.

Whether in visits, in public speaking, or in common conversation, almost all are enough apt to discern and reprobate the sin of tediousness as respects others ; and yet very few are fully aware of it as respects themselves. Their own company is, forsooth, so delightful, that their visits can never tire ; they themselves speak so well that nobody can wish them to have done ; they talk so charmingly that their own loquaciousness always gives entertainment rather than disgust.

Thus it is that some men, otherwise of good sense, unconsciously give pain by their prolixity, though in regard to the prolixity of any body but themselves, their taste is delicate even to squeamishness.

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## NUMBER CVI.

*Of some particulars conducive to conjugal peace and happiness.*

“ While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,  
Between us two let there be peace.”—

THESE are the words which Milton puts into the mouth of Eve, to pacify and sooth her incensed husband, at the moment he found himself involved, along with her, in a condition of guilt and misery occasioned primarily by her fault ; nor is there perhaps any thing more exquisitely pathetic in the immortal work of that poet. Indeed, throughout the whole speech of Eve in the latter part of the tenth book of *Paradise Lost*, the affectionate and pathetical tone in which she pleads, and her general manner, are such as must touch with commiseration any heart but one of stone.

In the lines selected for the present motto, there is a *Moral*, which comes home to the bosom of every intelligent man and woman in the married state. Next in importance to the serenity of a good conscience, is the enjoyment of domestic peace. With it, adversity is soothed, by the repose of home ; without it, prosperity is but a gilded misery. Connubial harmony, sweetens as well as enhances the common blessings of life ; while its opposite embitters whatever of enjoyment the smiles of fortune can bestow : so that the “dinner of herbs” is far better in the one case, than the “stalled ox” in the other.

It is not to my present purpose however, to describe at large, either the blissful fruits of connubial harmony, or the baneful consequences of domestic discord, but rather to suggest ways and means for securing the one and avoiding the other ; by which course, while shunning the beaten track of declamation, I am led into by-paths, or to observations very little connected. But if only one of these unconnected observations shall be found really useful, it is hoped that the reader will excuse all the rest for the sake of that one.

Although marriages, to be happy, must be founded in mutual affection, yet even that essentially necessary basis is not sufficient to build hopes upon without one's possessing, in addition, a reasonable prospect of competence,—the real amount of which, as respects the fashionable class, is not definable, by any fixed metes and bounds, being diverse according to the diversity of tastes and habits. It is but little that man absolutely needs : and were his desires in any measure proportionate to his real needs, a competence would, in most instances, be of very easy attainment. But, in the highly artificial state of society now existing, it unfortunately happens that the despotic court of Fashion

dooms very many to a life of celibacy, not for their want of ability to support the mere necessary expenses of a married state, but for want of ability to support its expenses in that sphere of life to which they have been accustomed, and from which it is their settled resolution never to descend ; chusing rather to forego the first and sweetest of social comforts, than to sink only a few degrees in *Fashion's* scale. Again, from the same cause, it happens still more unfortunately, that very many in the married state, turn their weal into wo, and sometimes their amity to discord, by beginning with and persisting in, a style of living utterly incompatable with their fortunes or their incomes. Of all the sources of domestic infelicity, this is at present one of the most prolific.

But to come more closely to the point in hand ;—in choosing a wife, examine carefully whether her domestic character be estimable. If her temper, her moral qualities, her deportment toward her parents, and the general tenor of her conduct in the domestic circle, speak highly in her favour, good earnest is then given that she will act her part well in a family of her own.

Expect not too much from *Woman*. It is neither an angelical, nor a paradisiacal being, that you are to enter into connubial alliance with, but a heritor of the infirmities of fallen nature,—one who, at best, has some of the ingredients of folly and perverseness in her composition. If then, you must needs have a perfect wife, the better way will be to wait till you become perfect yourself.

If your heart be infected with the scrofula of contempt for female nature, marry not at all till cured of that foul disease.

*Popenjay*, values himself greatly, as it would seem, upon his *manly* contempt of womankind, and particular-

ly of his wife. In his estimation, almost every thing she says is foolish, and more than half she does is wrong. That manner on his part, has occasioned, in her, an intellectual and moral debasement. Treated daily with disrespect and scorn, she has lost by degrees almost all respect for herself.

There are other pairs, who, in this respect, are very equally matched. For instance, *Pertinax* and his conjugal mate, dispute it together all the year round about trifles, because he is always in the right, and she never in the wrong. They are "as like as cherry to cherry," in their general qualities, which are passably good; and it only wants a little condescension on both sides, to render their union felicitous rather than otherwise.

Fix it as a maxim in your mind, that it is of more importance, generally speaking, for one to keep well with his wife, than with any other earthly friend. Acting on that maxim, and yet more on the sacred principle of moral and religious duty, ever treat your wife with heart-felt benevolence. Cast the mantle over the common frailties incidental to humanity; esteem and cherish her better qualities, and habitually maintain a tender and sympathetic consideration for her feelings.

Of the other sex, I crave the indulgence of hazarding the monition and the advice, which here follow.

Marry not the man who is known to be unkind, contemptuous, and scornful, to the mother that bare him:—it will be a miracle if he treat his wife any better.

Marry not a blasphemous infidel, however rich, or however accomplished. For, besides the weighty consideration of the contaminating influence of such an alliance, he that contemns the God that made him, is not one that will give due honour to the wife that is subject to him.

Marry not a profligate libertine in hopes of reforming him. Too feeble will be your cords to bind down

the headlong passions of a man alike regardless of the authority of moral principle, and of the opinions of all the respectable part of society.

Marry not a man, because you think him one that will tamely submit to be ruled by you. It had been the jesting boast of *Azuba*, that she intended to make a fool of her husband. She was saved that trouble by chancing to wed a ready-made one ; but she found his obstinacy and contrariety invincible. No effect at all could her reasoning have on a mind incapable of comprehending it ; nor any effect could her persuasions have upon a heart ever jealous of a rival power, and the more constantly alive to suspicions for its dwelling *in the dark*. It is a fact often attested by experience, that none are more jealous of falling under the dominion of their wives, or more unyielding to their reasonable influence, than men of inferior understandings and pertinacious tempers. “ Nothing is so dogmatical and invincible as a very shallow man who counts himself to be wise.”

Sweet is power to the human heart, and as sweet to the heart of woman, as of man. It is no wonder therefore, that there are sometimes rivalries for power in domestic government, as well as in governments of wider extent. It is a complaint of long standing, that very many women would fain read St. Paul thus, *Husbands be obedient to your wives*. A flagrant misconstruction, which, with all the orthodox of the masculine sex, can be regarded as very little better than downright heresy. Nevertheless, wives, who deserve the name, are entitled to much influence with their husbands. Nor, with husbands possessing a good understanding and a considerable share of the benevolent affections, will they often fail of obtaining all the influence they can reasonably desire, provided they take, and steadily pur-

sue, the right way for it. This nice point I will illustrate by a living example.

*Susannah*, is a plain woman, of plain good sense, possessing neither beauty nor wit: yet her husband, a very sensible and worthy man, and not at all of a cringing spirit, is dotingly fond of her, and some even say that she governs him. And what has been her artifice? None at all. Where is her ruling hand seen? Nowhere. *Susannah* had adorned herself with “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit;” and, from her bridal day, she has continued to wear it all along. Now, however marvellous it may seem to some, that same old fashioned ornament, so charms the husband that he scarcely can find it in his heart to deny her, and much less to chide her. If he happens to be moody, as now and then he is, the irresistible influence of the “law of kindness in her tongue,” presently restores him to good humour. If I have a correct notion of the trim of that man’s mind and heart, no termagant of a wife, however beautiful, or artful, or accomplished, could have gained half so much influence upon him.

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## NUMBER CVII.

*Of regarding Accomplishments as the principal part of female education.*

AMONG all the wants of humanity, few are more deplorable than the want of discrimination between things of great and things of little importance. The absence either of the existence or of the exercise of the faculty of such discrimination, occasions a considerable part of the errors of life. For, not to speak of the fatal error

of preferring the things which are temporal to the things that are eternal—often, very often, in merely our worldly concerns, we sacrifice the greater to the less. It would not be difficult to exemplify this sentiment in a variety of instances ; but I will confine myself to one only—*Female Education*.

We live in an age in which few, if any, whose opinions are worth notice, will deny the necessity of educating, and of *well* educating the female part of our species. Passing over, therefore, this point upon which there is so general an agreement, I will mention, and but barely mention, the primary qualities of a good female education.

The great benefit of education, and what should ever be its ultimate design, consists in its tendency to prepare the pupils to act the parts allotted them with propriety, both as immortal and as mortal beings :—and, in this view, education has an equal bearing upon both the sexes.

Female education, conducted upon rational principles, regards the parts that females are ordinarily destined to act upon the theatre of social life. Female children, in common with those of the other sex, are moral and accountable beings, destined to an immortal existence, and should therefore be assiduously taught “ the moral and religious knowledge of right and wrong,”—or their duty to God, to themselves, and to their fellow creatures. As social beings, their understanding must be cultivated. As moral beings, their hearts must be cultivated. They *may* meet with unforeseen temptations and snares, and should be taught self-government, modesty, and delicacy of thought, of speech, and of action. They *may* meet with hard and distressing trials, and should be early taught the value of a meek and humble spirit, which, in some women un-

der adversity, has shone with a lustre far surpassing that of the diamond. Moreover, they *may* be destined, however worthy or estimable, to lead a single and solitary life ; and they should be so educated that, having resources in their own minds, they will be able, not only to *endure*, but to *enjoy* their hours of retirement and solitude, and to make themselves respectable and agreeable, by the good sense of their conversation and the benevolence of their dispositions. Again, they *may* be wives ; and it is the part of education to qualify and prepare them to be *good* wives—conversable—mild and affectionate—discreet—hospitable, and yet saving and frugal—looking well to the ways of their households. Finally, they *may* be mothers ; and it is the part of education, to qualify them, as mothers, to educate their infant offspring. In this one particular, women have a most important part to act. Women, as mothers, do in a great measure form the characters of future women and of future men ; since the formation of character, for the first seven or eight years of life, depends chiefly on them. If they are well informed, discreet, and of goodly morals, their children are made, partly by their instruction and partly by imitation, to assimilate to these qualities. But if they are vain and frivolous, their little ones soon catch the contagion of their vanity and frivolity.

The foregoing particulars embrace most of the primary qualities or indispensable rudiments of a good female education. And yet, quite often is it remarked of females, that they have had an excellent education, merely because they have been taught the female *accomplishments*. Very little attention was ever paid to the culture of their understandings, of their minds, of their hearts, of their tempers. But, with much pains, and at considerable expense, they have got a *smatter*,

and a mere smatter, of what are called the *fine arts*, such as Embroidery, Drawing, Music, and so on. They have learned the discipline of the *fingers* and of the *foot*; and for this reason alone, their education is held in admiration. As if *mere* accomplishments, which usually become obsolete soon after marriage, were sufficient to prepare women to be excellent wives, excellent mothers, and excellent housekeepers; as if a *merely* accomplished woman were fitted either to act her part respectably in society, or to take comfort in the solitude of retirement, or under the decays of age; or as if the modesty and the refined manners of women spring from accomplishments, rather than from their being well taught in moral and religious duty. So far from all this, a married woman of *mere* accomplishments, and whose chief ambition is, to make a figure in the eye of the public—seldom fails of rendering her husband unhappy, and herself too.

In the school of Fashion, female accomplishments have long had the ascendant. Nor is it to my purpose to decry or despise them. Let those have them, if they please, whose rank in life requires it, and whose amleness of fortune can well afford the expense. Yet, even by *them*, be it remembered, that they are but of trifling account in comparison of the solid and useful parts of education. If accomplishments be appended to these, they may serve for adorning the whole: but hapless will be the husband and the children of the woman, and quite as hapless the woman herself, who rests her character and conduct in life upon accomplishments alone.

As to families of the common sort, possessed neither of high rank nor of ample fortunes, the plain, useful, education, is the best for their daughters. This is all that can, ordinarily, do them any good; and more than

this *may* do them much harm. A very ancient and a very respectable writer—whom we ought to read much oftener than we do—hath told us of a knowledge that *puffeth up*.\* And perhaps there is no kind of knowledge more *puffing*, than the one I have now been mentioning. A female, of scanty information and weak intellects, so values herself for the circumstance of her being initiated in the practice of some of the fine arts, that she loses by it the use of her hands. She will vouchsafe indeed to employ her pretty fingers, now and then, in fancy-work for amusement; but in nothing that is really useful; in nothing that earns bread; in nothing that can turn to any valuable account. Peradventure she is in impoverished circumstances; peradventure her condition is such as imperiously calls for the useful labour of her hands. It makes no odds. She is not of the labouring class, but far above it. *She* do the common work of womankind, *she*, who had gone through all the grades of fashionable education! The idea is too monstrous.

Thus, instead of being made by their education, the more capable of helping themselves in this world of “thorns and thistles,” of labour, toil, and hardship; there are some, and perhaps not a few, whose very education renders them but the more helpless.

\* St. Paul.

## NUMBER CVIII.

*Of the common use of false weights and measures in dealing out both Praise and Censure.*

—“O, that men’s ears should be  
To counsel deaf, but not to flattery !”

SHAKESPEARE.

In the whole compass of human traffick there is perhaps no commodity that is dealt out with less regard to weight and measure, than Praise ; if we only except its opposite, namely, dispraise or reproach.

In the bestowment of praise we are very apt to be guided by our feelings, or our interests, rather than our judgments. Freely, and in more than full measure, we bestow upon our friends what costs us nothing, and what we secretly hope they will repay us in the same way. *To praise the Athenians is the way to be praised by the Athenians*—was one of the proverbs of antiquity. Neither ought it to be regarded as a peculiarity of the Athenian character, but rather as a common feature in our general nature. There is no so ready a way to obtain flattery, as to bestow it plentifully. And hence men flatter, with the view of being flattered in return.

Indeed it is better of the two, to be too lavish of praise, than too prodigal of censure. But even the former is of evil tendency, because they who find it easy to obtain a greater quantity of praise than they deserve, will not only be the less careful to deserve it, but also the less likely to make a just estimate of their own characters ; self-love, naturally inclining us to *think* of ourselves, quite as well as we find others *say* of us. Moreover, extravagant encomium, besides violating truth, and infusing the poison of flattery, seldom

fails of injuring the subject of it, by occasioning a critical investigation of faults or defects, which, else, might have been less noticed or sooner forgotten. Nor would it be hazarding too much, to say, that undue encomium is even more likely to do us an essential injury than undue censure ; for the latter might possibly be the means of meliorating the qualities of our hearts, whereas the former directly tends to pervert and deprave them.

Whilst some praise almost nobody, others praise almost every body. These last are as nauseously sweet, as the others are crabbedly sour. Affecting the superlative of candor, they speak alike well of the generality of their species ; and so, as far as in them lies, they put upon one and the same level, Wisdom and Folly, Virtue and Vice, and pour the incense of their own foolishness upon the whole mass. This indiscriminate praise is the meanest of all adulation ; and it tends to destroy, among men, all sense of distinction of character. One who is accustomed to speak in nearly the same favourable terms of all, is either too weak, or too insincere, to be deserving of the esteem of any.

Next to the mischievous folly of the aforementioned species of indiscriminate praise, is that of bestowing unqualified applause upon characters or works, which are commendable upon the whole, but censurable in some of their parts. Men, and the works of men, are always imperfect, however excellent in a general view ; and it is the part of wisdom to distinguish between their excellencies and their imperfections ; noting the one sort for imitation, and the other for avoidance. But it is too much the custom, to laud whatever appertains to your friend, *because he is your friend*. This is yielding to friendship more than its due, and more than good conscience can admit of ; as it partakes of

the dishonesty of using false weights and false measures. Not but that it is allowable, and even dutiful, in many instances to conceal the fault we know ; for oftentimes circumstances require, that, in speaking of others, we make it a rule, “ rather to say nothing that is false, than all that is true.” Nevertheless, to eulogize the *whole* of characters, which are adorned with manifest excellencies and at the same time blemished with defects which are alike manifest, is to blend truth with falsehood, and to present to the view a fallacious, rather than a real likeness. As to speak well of every body is false candor, so to commend alike every thing in, or done by, one’s friend, is false praise.

*De mortuis nil nisi bonum—say nothing but good of the dead*—is an old maxim, and, in a qualified sense, a very just one. But though humanity demands, that we “tread lightly on the dust of the dead,” and although decency forbids all *unnecessary* exposure of the failings and blemishes in their lives ; yet the sacred laws of truth, peremptorily prohibit exaggerated praise even of *them*. This is an error, to which the ardor (not to say the *pride*) of friendship, is exceedingly liable. Funeral panegyrics, epitaphs, and biographical memoirs, often, very often, portray the affectionate feelings of surviving friends, rather than the real picture of character. Not to mention, that over-praising the dead, is done, sometimes, for the sake of flattering the living.

Eulogy, whether of the living or the dead, which evidently overleaps the bounds of truth, defeats its own purpose, and has even the effect of satire. So that we may do our friends as real injury by excessive praise, as by defamation.

As we are prone to over-praise those we have a warm affection for, we are still more prone, on the other

hand, to disparage or undervalue those we dislike ; grudging to allow them such good qualities as they really possess, or to commend them for such good deeds as they have really done ; and displaying all their failings in the highest colours of aggravation. This perverse propensity, wrought into the very web of our fallen nature, is exceedingly difficult to cure. How few possess enough of magnanimity, not to say of the genius and spirit of christianity, to do full justice to the good deeds of a real or supposed foe ; or even to one belonging to an adyverse party, in religion, or in poltcs !

“ The true critic” (said Dean Swift, ironically) “ is a discoverer and collector of writers’ faults.”

But not to run foul of the critics ; some men and women, like flies, feed altogether, upon the sore part of the characters of those about them. These *scavengers* of reputation, are ever hunting about, with a microscopic eye, for foibles, infirmities, and blemishes ; and are too busy abroad, to regulate things aright at home.

Pliny relates of Julius Cæsar, that he blamed, in so artful a manner, that he seemed to praise. On the contrary, others are as artful in their praises, as Cæsar was in his reproaches ; and that too, with the basest intentions. “ They use envenomed praise, which, by a side-blow, exposes, in the person they commend, such faults as they dare not any other way lay open.”

The tooth of calumny never wounds more deeply, nor ever infuses more poison into the wound, than by this insidious method.

## NUMBER CIX.

*Of officiously meddling with, and a total disregard of,  
the affairs of others.*

SOCIETY has been infested, in all ages of the world, with persons prone to intrude themselves into the concerns of their neighbours ; with tattlers, busy bodies and intermeddlers, who must needs have their spoons in every body's porringer. These unwelcome and troublesome guests were distinctly marked by the sagacious eye of the king of Israel, who has given them their full due. Indeed some of this sort are quite ingenious in their way, and so much the worse ; for by how much greater is their ingenuity, by so much the more mischief they do : their minds resembling a fertile soil, which for want of proper culture, bears nothing but weeds and poisonous plants.

Not but that, now and then, an officious intermeddler, or even a talebearer, may mean no harm ; the one being actuated by an undue opinion of his own importance, and the other from the vanity of appearing to know the characters and the concerns of all about him. But intentional sowers of discord, who, from envy, malice, or the love of mischief, employ themselves in breeding dissents in families and neighbourhoods, are well nigh as pestilent as thieves and robbers ; and the less they are punishable by civil law, the more should they be made to feel that species of punishment which public opinion inflicts.

Parents and preceptors can hardly do a better service for their children, than by principling their minds and fixing their hearts against faults so pernicious to society and so ruinous to character : faults which are

curable when they first appear in the young mind, but which grow into inveterate habits by the indulgence of neglect. It is hardly conceivable what a vast amount of evil might be prevented if the young were taught as generally and as carefully in this particular, as they are in the first rudiments of learning.

By those who, from habit, or from temper, make it their business and delight to pry into and publish the failings of others, be it remembered, “*that at that day when the failings of all shall be made manifest, the attention of each individual will be fixed only on his own.*”

There is ■ fault, however, directly opposite to that of officiously meddling with the concerns of our neighbours : I mean the absence of all heartfelt concern for any but ourselves and our near kin. This fault, however artfully it may be covered, springs, for the most part, from sordid selfishness, or from anti-social apathy of heart.

Selfishness, which is the love of self and every thing else for the sake of self, has the power of keeping some persons at a vast distance from intermeddling with their neighbours’ affairs, for which they care not a straw any farther than such extraneous affairs have a bearing upon their own personal interests. So also the cold-hearted, in whose bosoms is the perpetual calm of apathy, trouble not their neighbours as busy bodies in their matters ; because they have not enough energy of soul either to love or to hate in good earnest. Now it often falls out, that some belonging to each of these two classes value themselves mightily upon their practical abstraction from all concerns but their own, and boast of it as a shining virtue. “*We are not meddlers, not we. It is our manner to mind our own business, and to let all other folk alone.*” Nevertheless, if they

would open the folds of their own hearts and observe fairly what is going on there, they would find that their not being meddlers is owing to any thing else, rather than to a pure principle of virtue.

And here it is not unimportant to remark, that it is no less the purpose and business of proper education to foster and encourage the social feelings of our nature, than it is to eradicate dispositions of intrusive meddling: for if one without all warmth of heart any way, be seldom tempted to become a busy body in other mens' matters, he as seldom is much better than a mere blank in society—doing little mischief, and as little good.

*Am I my brother's keeper?*—We know who said it. And so, in manifold instances, when one is ruining himself and family by the mismanagement of his affairs, or when one betrays the symptoms of an inceptive vice, which, growing into a habit, will land him in perdition; his neighbours coolly look on, saying in their hearts, and to one another, “*It is his own affair.*” Not employing a single effort to save him, though, often, betwixt themselves, they shake the head, and remark, that he is in the road to ruin. Perhaps it is a youth, that is supposed to have stepped into this fatal road; a young man of goodly promise, or a young woman of amiable dispositions, but wanting discretion. Perhaps that youth is an orphan, and errs for lack of the guiding hand of a parent. It is all the same. Every body is sorry, mighty sorry indeed, but no body moves the tongue, or lifts a finger, for the purpose of rescue or prevention.

It is not so that we act in other respects. We struggle hard to save a fellow being that is drowning before our eyes. Should we see a man stand upon the brink of a frightful precipice and unconscious of his danger, doubt-

less we would instantly give him warning. Hardly would we neglect to snatch either the empoisoned bowl from the lips of one that mistook the poison for a wholesome beverage, or the knife or razor from the throat of a man or woman in the act of committing suicide. Common humanity impels us to acts of this sort. And yet when we see in scarcely less jeopardy of another kind, a neighbour, an acquaintance—one whom the offices of discreet and faithful friendship might peradventure rescue and restore—we are listless—we let him alone—we'll not meddle—'tis his own affair!

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## NUMBER CX.

*Of turning good to ill, by tampering with it.*

A GREAT part of the *ill* we suffer might be avoided, if we would only learn to let *well* alone. But such is the plague of our hearts, relative to temporal as well as higher matters, that we are seldom or never, quite contented with our lot, when even it is in no wise an unpleasant one, but must “*paw* it about,” till we mar and spoil what we perversely endeavour to mend.

How often is comeliness of face, of features, and of personal form, disfigured by affectation, which would fain make better, what God hath made well.

How often do we lose our health by tampering with it, in order to make it more healthy. When we are well, we cannot be easy, and let *well* alone, but must needs be meddling with the mechanism while it is going exactly right. A morning bitter, or some far-famed nostrum, how good is it to prevent disease and preserve the health! or rather—not to speak ironically, but so-

berly—how frequently it destroys the very stamina of sound constitutions, induces a train of ailments, and immaturely peoples the grave! A healthy body is dieted into a consumption by plying it with physic instead of food.

An Italian nobleman, whose fatal folly it was not to let *well* alone, ordered, as a solemn warning to others, the following line to be engraven upon his tomb. “ *I was well—I wanted to be better—and here I am!* ”

Mark the children that are gorged with dainties, and enticed to eat before they are hungry, who, like young chickens in an oven, are kept from cold and moisture, and even from the open air, and drugged, in way of prevention, as well as for the slightest ailment; mark their spindle-legs, their pale and sickly faces, the feebleness of their whole frame. And now observe, on the other hand, the broods that have experienced none of this queasy care; whose food is plain, and but just enough, to satisfy the cravings of nature; whose beds are any thing else than *down*, and in rooms, through which the winds whistle; who are always in the free air, and often exposed to cold and wet:—observe their freshness of health, their ruddy countenances, their muscular limbs, their strength and agility.

Numerous, and almost innumerable, are the instances of well-conditioned men and families, who are mourning over the ruin of their wordly circumstances—not by any direct providential stroke of adversity, nor by means of conduct of their own that was morally bad, but solely because they did not let *well* alone.

On e“ sells the pasture to buy the horse.” He barters away his fast estate for goods. A single turn of the wheel of fortune, turns him to a bankrupt.

Another, not content with being a farmer *merely*, hankers for the distinction of office. Luckily for his feelings, but unfortunately for his circumstances, he

obtains it. He neglects his farm, and his farm neglects him ; his expenses increase, and his income diminishes ; he goes behindhand daily, and ere long, runs out.

A Third, scorning to be outshone by his more wealthy neighbour, tries hard to rival him in worldly show. He is as good, and his children inherit as good flesh and blood ; his credit enables him to borrow ; and genteelness of appearance will put his family on a level with the best. So he goeth ; and “ his poverty cometh as an armed man.”

A Fourth, though snug and comfortable at home, fancies he can do better, a great deal better, abroad. He has heard of the goodly lands which yield astonishing abundance, and almost without labour. He sells all he posseseth, and on he goes, at random. He arrives ; when, lo ! he finds, even *there*, a full measure of the thorns and thistles of the curse, and peradventure finds himself cheated at last out of his all.

In sober truth, there is in our nature such a restlessness of disposition, that we commonly make to ourselves the full half of the ills we suffer. There is a *something more*, which we are ever in search of, and never get at ; and, in this blind and restless chase, we poison the cup by our endeavours to sweeten it.

Of all morbid habits, that of being dissatisfied with even the comfortable conditions of life which Providence has placed us in, is one of the most unfortunate. With persons of this cast, it makes no difference though their success in life be never so great ; the same sickness of heart cleaves to them as a garment, even after their fortunes have never so much exceeded their own expectations.

One of this sort, was the Prince Potemkin of Russia. From a low family, he had been raised to the greatest wealth and the highest dignities. And his biographer,

who was a familiar acquaintance of that prince, observes of him, as here follows :—“ He is melancholy in the midst of pleasures ; unhappy from the excess of good fortune ; satiated with every thing.”

The following form of devotion used by one of the ancients, is suitable to blind mortals of Adam’s race, who know not, nor can know precisely, either the quantities or the qualities of worldly enjoyment most conducive to their own good.—“ Give me whatsoever may be good for me, though I should neglect to pray for it ; and deny me whatsoever would be hurtful, though I should ignorantly make it the object of my supplications.” The ways of divine providence are mysterious, but unerring ; its kindness is manifested frequently in withholding as well as in giving ; as well in restraints as in indulgences ; as well in disappointments as in crowning our wishes with success. How oft, in our journey of life, has providence thwarted our inclinations, and by this means prevented our wanderings ? How often have we been walking blindly upon the edge of a precipice, prepared to take the fatal leap, when an invisible power diverted our course by disappointing us of our purpose ? How oft have incidents that seemed evil to us at first, been productive of good ; and how oft might the things which our hearts desired and of which providence disappointed us, have been hurtful in the enjoyment ? As little children cry for what would injure them, and struggle with the hand that restrains them from running into dangers ; so we, children of a larger size, but in many instances not knowing what is good for ourselves, frequently desire, with most eagerness, what would be most for our hurt, and perversely repine even at those providential restraints and trials which are the effects of a merciful purpose.

“ During the violence of a storm,” says a German sage, “ a traveller offered up his supplications, and be-

sought Heaven to assuage the tempest. But the storm continued with unabating fury ; and while he was drenched with the flood, fatigued with his journey, and exposed, without shelter, he became peevish, and even complained aloud of the ways of providence. Approaching at length the borders of a forest, he said to himself, "Here I shall find protection, notwithstanding Heaven has neglected me, and turned a deaf ear to my prayers." But as he went forward a robber sprang out suddenly from behind a bush, and the traveller, affrighted at the prospect of instant death, fled out of the forest, exposing himself again to the tempest, of which he had so grievously complained. The robber, in the mean time, fitting an arrow to his bow, took exact aim ; but the bow-string being relaxed by the moisture of the weather, the arrow fell short of its mark, and the traveller escaped unhurt. As he continued his journey a voice proceeded awful from the clouds : "Cease mortal, to repine at the divine dispensations ; and learn to acknowledge the goodness of God in refusing as well as in granting your petitions. The storm which you complained of so bitterly has been the means of your preservation. Had not the bow-string of your enemy been rendered useless by rain, you had fallen a victim to his violence."

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## NUMBER CXI.

*Of a restless desire to know what others say of us.*

"Take no heed to all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee,"

SOLOMON.

ALMOST no weakness of our fallen, feeble, and erring nature is more disquieting to ourselves, or more troub-

lesome to our acquaintances, than an overweening curiosity to know what is said of us.

A person of this turn is never at his ease. Jealousy is, in him, an ever-waking sentinel. His veriest familiars, he fears will slander or undervalue him ; and if he happens to hear that any one of them has spoken of him slightly, he instantly regards that one as his foe, and thenceforward is the more jealous of all the rest.

In company, he views every look with a suspicious eye. He reads a plot against himself even in a nod, or a whisper. If what he finds to have been said of him can admit of a double meaning, he gives it the worse meaning of the two. If he finds himself commended as to his general character, but censured in some particular instance, he is wounded, just as though the whole of his character had fallen under reprobation.

This restless curiosity to know what is said of him, keeps his mind perpetually as upon the rack. Day by day he is anxiously inquisitive upon this point. If he fail of the object of his enquiries, and can hear of little or nothing said about him, either one way or the other ; then he is stung at the heart with imagined neglect. And, contrariwise, if he chance to find that which he so anxiously enquires after, he finds it perhaps to his own cost and discomfort. He will have gained an article of intelligence which he had better have been without. His experience, peradventure, will have accorded with what we are plainly advertised of in the above-cited pithy admonition of the Wise Man.

The distemper of mind here spoken of, may arise from an ardent desire of esteem and the consequent dread of disesteem, and it may be found in persons possessed of some very estimable qualities of heart. But whatever be its origin, or in whomsoever found, it is

the cause of a great deal of useless disquietude, and ever exposes one to wanton sport and ridicule.

Now, it being a great pity, that persons of the one sex or the other, who are estimable in some respects, and yet labour under this infirmity, should not reason themselves out of it; I crave leave to lay before them the following considerations.

1. Those even, whose characters are good in the main, must needs be sensible, if they have any competent measure of self-knowledge, that they are not quite perfect. And why then should they be angry that others, too, are sensible of it, and that their imperfections are sometimes spoken of? It is by no means certain that there is in this thing any enmity or real ill will.

2. Persons possessed of this morbid or excessive sensibility with regard to their own reputations, cannot but remember that themselves, one time or another, and in free conversation, have remarked on the foibles and faults of those whom they highly esteemed upon the whole, and for whom they had at the same time a sincere friendship. And assuredly it is unreasonable for one to be angry for receiving the same measure which one metes out. If a person you thought your friend, hath spoken slightly of you in one single respect or other; what then? Have you not yourself, sometimes, and in some particulars, spoken slightly of those whom you were inclined to rank in the number of your friends? If yourself have done it, surely you are not entitled to the right of waxing warm when the same is done to you.

3. In a fit of levity, or of ill humour, it is not uncommon for some folks to speak with partial disrespect of the self-same persons, whom, at other times, they mention with expressions of high esteem and affectionate

regard. So that a great part of people's ill sayings of one another, are attributable to peevishness or thoughtlessness, and not to malignity alone. Hence the author of the admirable book of Ecclesiasticus observes—“*There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart.*”

4. Even the ill natured remarks of an enemy might be turned to a profitable use, by carefully correcting, in one's self, the fault or foible that occasioned them. It is told of the Prince of Conde, who was the most eminent hero of his day, that his domestics observing with what great attention he was reading a certain pamphlet, one of them said to him, “This must be a very fine piece, since you take so much pleasure in reading it.” To which the Prince replied, “It is very true that I read this with great pleasure, because it tells me my faults, which no man dares venture to do.”—The pamphlet was in the strain of severe invective upon the errors, faults, and foibles of the same Prince of Conde.

5. We seldom miss it more than in imagining that all about us take an interest in our ordinary concerns. If we think the world spends much attention about us one way or the other, we have a mistaken notion of our own consequence. For, with a few exceptions, the individuals of community are very little the subjects of each others' thoughts and conversation ; the generality being too busy in thinking of themselves, to employ many of their thoughts elsewhere. Had one, by the help of magic, or by whatever means, the power of rendering himself invisible, and should he, in using the privilege of invisibility, go about, from house to house, over his whole neighbourhood and town, he would probably find himself spoken of by his neighbours and acquaintances, more seldom than he had expected ; and, in all probability, too, he would hear the very same

persons speak quite differently of him, at different times.

In few words ; universal and unqualified approbation it is folly to expect. And although we should by no means be regardless of what others think or say of us, yet the best way, or rather the only good way, is to be more solicitous to deserve esteem than to win it—more solicitous to do well than to obtain the credit of doing well ; and thus, to proceed on in the straight line, without fishing for praise, or being overmuch fearful of reproach. Whoso acteth in this manner, and upon pure evangelical principles, enjoys a consciousness of feelings far more delightful, than any thing that can spring from the unmerited applause of ten thousand tongues.

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## NUMBER CXII.

### *Summary Characteristics.*

“ Wisdom and folly meet, mix and unite,  
“ Virtue and vice blend their black and their white.”

INFERIOR animals of the same kind have, in general, a sameness of physiognomy, and so trifling are the shades of difference between them in any respect, that the portraiture of one individual describes the whole species. But as human animals are moral and accountable, and subject to law, a marvellous provision is made in the divine economy for the identification of every individual : in so far that each is distinguishable from each, by the look, by the voice, by the gait, by the hand-writing, and by several other modes of difference, hardly describable, though plainly perceivable. Were it otherwise, the Judge might be mistaken for

the thief : the innocent and the guilty would be blended together without the possibility of making any legal discrimination betwixt them.

The differences are no fewer, but perhaps more multifarious, in the features of mind. So that if the minds of mankind were as visible as their bodies, the individuality of each person might perhaps be as clearly determined from the former, as from the latter.

Of the different features of mind, including qualities of heart as they appear in overt act, the following are samples ; in sketching which, I am constrained, for the sake of necessary brevity, to personify the 26 letters of the alphabet.

**A**—Is *noble*-spirited, but not *charitable* : in a public subscription his name figures well, but a **Lazar**, might starve at his gate.

**B**—Is quite candid enough in respect to *practice* ; but if you thwart merely his *speculative opinions*, he raves like a bear.

**C**—Is a woman, peevish and querulous about little things :—her heavy calamities she bears with pious resignation, and with more than masculine fortitude.

**D**—Enters with spirit into a *laudable* public undertaking, so the plan comes from *himself*, or *he* has the direction of it ; else he will have nothing at all to do with the business, not *he*.

**E**—Lives in the *practice* of vice ; but would insult a man that should say any thing derogatory of the *principles* of virtue.

**F**—Takes pride in railing against pride : he hates the pride of fashion, and is proud of being out of the fashion.

**G**—And his rib, abroad or in company are all butter and honey :—their ill nature they save for domestic use.

H—Is easy of temper, but very far from compassionate : his easiness of temper is nothing but apathy.

I—Is good or ill tempered, by fits and starts : now he is so pleasant that nothing can anger him ; then again, he is so techy that nothing can please him.

J—Is rough and impetuous, but of a feeling heart : his mind, as respects anger, is like punk-wood, that in a moment catches fire, which as quickly goes out.

K—Is slow to anger, but much slower to be appeased ; once affront him, and he is *coolly* your enemy for ever.

L—Is not hard to be reconciled in a matter in which the fault lies altogether on the other side ; but when he has been in fault himself, the consciousness of it stirs his pride and stiffens his temper.

M—Feels strongly whatever relates to himself : other people's misfortunes he bears with singular calmness of fortitude.

N—Though possessed of no extraordinary share of wisdom, is affronted if you decline to follow his advice, and is equally affronted if any body presumes to advise him.

O's cringing sycophancy to superiors might be thought humility, were he not brutally imperious and overbearing to inferiors and dependants.

P—Loudly complains of the needy friends he abandons, to escape the reproach of abandoning them in their need.

Q—Frequently changes her friends for a slight cause, or for no cause, and always likes the last the best :—with her, friendship is like a nosegay, which pleases only while it is fresh.

R—Would appear well enough, but for his affectation of appearing *mighty* well, which makes him ap-

pear below himself ; the vanity of being thought important, rendering him ridiculous.

S—Tamey acquiesces in what is generally believed, because it is generally believed : he wants no other proof of the truth of a thing, than its having a plurality of numbers on its side.

T—Runs into extravagant singularities, from the vanity of appearing possessed of superior understanding.

U—Would not be suspected of dishonesty, but for his frequently boasting that he is honest ; nor of want of veracity, but for his habit of propping his word and promise with asseverations.

V—Passes for wise, because he is taciturn—peradventure not so much from gravity, as stupidity.

W—Might please every body with the eloquence and good sense of his conversation, if he knew only when to have done.

X—A lady of fasion, affects exquisite sensibility, by her look, her manner, and her tones of voice ;—such is her tenderness, that she weeps over high-life scenes of fictitious distress ; and such is her obduracy, that she regards with unfeeling indifference, those vulgar objects of real distress that have claims upon her practical charity.

Y—A philosopher of the school of cosmopolites, possesses a fund of speculative benevolence, which he often makes use of in word, but never in deed :—like his prototype, the pagan philosopher *Seneca*, who wrote an excellent book upon charity ; but though he was rich, he gave nothing away.

Z—endeavours to commute for his neglects and trespasses in some things, by a grave and punctilious exactness in others. He will go miles to church on a stormy day :—in his worldly deal, he is not altogether a *hard* honest man, but *hardly* honest.

## NUMBER CXIII.

*Of the necessity of seasonable precaution.*

THAT “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” is an old and true proverb, which is applicable alike to a multitude of cases: the ills we suffer in life being, in a large proportion, either of our own procurement, or such as might have been prevented by timely care and precaution.

It seems to have been a standing custom of the Asiatics, in their epistolary correspondence, to conclude a letter with this sage advice, *Take care of your health*: a precept which, were it generally put in practice, would save the lives of multitudes in every country. The grave is peopled with myriads, who might still have enjoyed the light of life but for the intemperate manner of their living; and with other myriads whose deaths were occasioned by unnecessarily exposing their health.

The lovely Belinda, falls into a hectic in the flower of her age. The life-spring within her fails; the art of medicine is unavailing; “the worm of death is in her bloom.” Yet, what a pound of cure can’t remove, an ounce of prudence might have prevented.

There was a time, and a very long time, when, in the christianized world, it was thought a merit to pain and torment and waste the corporeal part of our nature: when the body was considered as at utter enmity with the soul; when this grovelling inmate was voluntarily subjected to cold and nakedness and to unmerciful scourging, in order to curb and break its rebellious propensities. We live, however, in a more rational age. Blessed be the day of Martin Luther’s birth, and blessed the work achieved by him! He gave

the death-blow to this mummery, and brought the body again into favour with its superior in the partnership. But whether it be a relic of the old popish superstition, or to whatever cause else it may be attributable, there are said to be ladies at this day, even *protestant* ladies, who mortify, distress, and consume their own precious bodies, by keeping them in *irons*! But this by the bye.

It is no uncommon thing to anticipate the stroke of time. Often, very often, the vigorous and robust squander their health and hasten the blow that levels them; while the feeble, by temperance and assiduous care, spin out life to an advanced age.

Many of our mishaps, or misfortunes, as we call them, spring from imprudence or neglect. Through the neglect of a small leak a ship is sunk, and its crew perhaps lost. The neglect of a few feet of fence may destroy a crop, and so may a few days negligence and sloth in seed time or harvest. Angry law-suits, and heavy pecuniary losses, not unfrequently might have been prevented by a seasonable attention that would have required very little of time or labour. Some plunge themselves into inextricable embarrassment, which might have been avoided had a portion of their leisure been devoted to the devising of a reasonable plan of living; and others again are impoverished and devoured by artificial wants, of which they might easily have prevented the intrusion. Indeed, of instances there is no end.

But that which is of the most importance by many degrees, is yet behind. There are means preventional of *moral*, as well as of natural evil. Most of the vices that infest society, and bring utter ruin npon individuals, are more easy of prevention than of cure: and it is to be hoped that the time is coming when civil governments, blending christian morals with state policy, will

employ their power and influence fully as much to prevent crime as to punish it. That would be an era more happy than language can describe. But passing over what is remote and contingent, I will mention, and *but* mention, the actual and practicable powers of two kinds of government—*Domestic* and *Personal*.

Inconsiderate parents are apt to think, and do sometimes *say*, that time will cure the faults of their children. This is a sad and fatal mistake. Not but that time perchance may cure the minor follies and errors of the juvenile mind; such follies and errors as are peculiarly incidental to the inexperience, the imbecile judgment, and the eager vivacity, of childhood and immature youth: but *immoral* propensities are strengthened, rather than cured, by time, which matures them into fixed habits. The bias to lying, profaneness, defrauding, or whatever *immorality* else, is not so very hard to cure when it first appears in the *child*; but if it be neglected then, it grows into an inveterate habit in the *man*. It is of importance, however, to premise, that the *inceptive* *immorality* of childhood is to be cured chiefly by *moral* means; by example; by exhibiting to the view its odious nature and direful consequences; by cogent and convincing appeals to the understanding, and affectiuate appeals to the heart:— and not so much, certainly not *altogether*, by corporeal punishment. The parents, if such there be, who think that whippings alone will straighten the crooks in their childrens' minds, deserve for their folly a sound whipping, themselves.

One of the most important objects of domestic government, is so to train up children that they may have a due government of themselves when they shall come to be full grown men and women. This is a point, on which the worth or worthlessness of character greatly

depends ; for discreet and well regulated self-government, is the surest preventive of the deplorable excesses of passion and appetite, since it keeps upon them a stronger and a more steady rein than any other human government does, or can do. Neither is the science of self-government so very hard to learn, nor the practice of it so very difficult, provided it be set about, as well in good season, as in good earnest. But the longer it is neglected, the greater is the difficulty ; till at last it becomes next to impossible for one to rule his passions or restrain his appetites. Immoral habits, which might be easily prevented by timely discipline, attain gigantic strength by long indulgence.

It is out of our power to alter the structure of our bodies : we must take them as they are, for better or for worse. We cannot change our complexions or fashion our own features. We cannot add to our stature, or make even a single hair of our head white or black. But it is not altogether so with the mind. We *may*, with the divine helps afforded us, improve and meliorate *that*. We *may* keep our passions and our appetites in subordination to our reason. And in this necessary and noble exercise should every one be employed, day by day, who wishes to be wise, or hopes to be happy.

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#### NUMBER CXIV.

*Of our proneness to run from one extreme to another.*

It often happens, that when we set ourselves to straighten a crook, instead of making it quite straight, we crook it the contrary way, or carry things from one extreme to the other.

A youth, of an ingenuous, liberal, temper, is apt to be not regardful enough of his own interest. He esteems money as trash, and scorns to employ his cares about it. As it comes to him easily, it goes from him freely. He gives, he spends, he squanders, till at length, experiencing embarrassment, he resolves to become frugal and provident. But such a youth seldom stops at the true point, but leaps at once, far beyond it. Heartily sick of extravagance, he makes a covenant with avarice, and changes to unfeeling, illiberal, and miserly.

The extreme of confidence often runs into the extreme of jealousy. Of those who live to a considerable age, very few perhaps leave the world with as good an opinion of mankind as they had begun it. To the eye of the ingenuous but inexperienced youth, the world appears bright and charming. He looks to meet with justice, candor and honor, in his intercourse with his fellow-beings. Fancy gilds and bedecks the objects of his hopes, and whatever is promised him by hope, he regards as sure and certain. Presently however, the illusion begins to vanish. He meets with disappointments : he experiences cold-blooded selfishness, deceit, fraud and perfidy ; his confidence in men turns to suspicion ; the world he concludes, is a cheat ; he hastily says in his heart, that all men are rogues and liars ; and he becomes sour and misanthropic. By how much his opinion of mankind was too favorable in his younger days, by so much is it too uncharitable in his advanced age.

Self-convicted credulity is apt to run into scepticism : and so also, a zeal to free themselves from all shackles of superstition is sorely apt to drive men upon the fatal rocks of infidelity and irreligion.

Gibbon the historian, no less celebrated for parts and

learning than notorious for infidelity, was, in his youth, an implicit believer in, and a zealot for, the nonsensical popish doctrine of transubstantiation. To the arguments and expostulations of his father and other protestant relations and friends, he was utterly deaf. But happening, of himself, to find out an argument which convinced him of the monstrous absurdity of that doctrine, he rejected it, and, along with it, rejected the whole system of divine revelation ; which he, in the manner of Voltaire, encountered with the weapons of sneer and contempt, rather than by fair and manly reasoning. Nor is it unlikely that the rank infidelity, so general, a few years since, among the learned and the fashionable in Europe, sprung chiefly from the same root. Identifying the monstrous doctrines and superstitious rites of the corrupted church in whose bosom they had been educated, with the gospel itself, and discerning clearly the ridiculous absurdities of the former, they hesitated not to explode the latter.

Some men, of impetuous tempers, but of feeling hearts, are possessed, by turns, of ferocity, and, on the other hand, of an undue measure of indulgent feelings. In their gusts of anger, the house is made to ring from side to side with their vociferations. Hard words, and sometimes hard blows, are dealt out for petty offences, or for none at all. But no sooner is the tempest subsided than they deeply relent ; and, passing into the other extreme, they smother their little ones with caresses, and indulge them in every thing. A certain nobleman of former times is said to have been so remarkable in this respect, that his domestics threw themselves in his way whenever they saw him angry, in order to be beaten by him ; well knowing that he would reward them bountifully with gifts as soon as his passion cooled.

Again, some fathers frame in their own minds a system of paternal government, that is fine-spun in theory, but impracticable. *They* will govern by rule and plummet. *They* will begin betimes, and effectually whip old Adam out of their children. So they do begin, and so they proceed, sternly marking every childish foible, till, finding their efforts baffled, they rather cast away, than remit, the reins of government, and let their children do as they will.

It is observable, that the children by a second marriage are often treated with a great deal more indulgence than those of the former one : and it is nowise unaccountable. For besides the consideration that the children of a second marriage are, not unfrequently, the children of old age ; when a father is conscious that he has been severe overmuch toward the first brood, that consciousness alone will incline him to be too indulgent toward the last. Thus, by opposite extremes, injuring, if not spoiling, both stocks, and setting his family against himself, and at variance with one another.

Beware of extremes. Several of the minor virtues of our nature degenerate to folly or vice when carried beyond the due measure. Sensibility is not more lovely in its proper degree, than contemptible in its extravagance. A sentimentalist, puling over an uprooted flower or a maimed butterfly, excites disgust rather than sympathy. Good humour, candour, and generosity, may each and all be carried to extreme. If our good humour render our moral characters flexible, and our hearts too yielding ; if our candour degenerate to a sort of indiscriminate approvance of truth and error, of right and wrong, of the good and of the evil ; if our generosity infringe upon the sacred laws of justice, by an hospitality exceeding our circumstances and means,

or by giving gifts in preference to paying honest debts : — in these, as in divers other cases, too much of a good thing turns it to bad.

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## NUMBER CXV.

*Of despising small things.*

“ He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little.”

ECCLESIASTICUS.

THIS text, though apocryphal, is consonant to the whole tenor of human experience.

Time, which is of such invaluable account to every human being, is made up as of little particles that ever are flying away from us, and never to return : No, never.

“ Time that ensueth  
Is but the death of time that went before.  
Youth is the death of childhood ; age of youth.”

How inconceivably small are the passing moments ! yet they are not to be contemned. For of these is the whole duration of life composed ; and it is the assiduous and wise use of moments, that crowns life with honour. On the other hand, by undervaluing the moments and neglecting to employ them, whole days and whole years are lost.

We often complain of the shortness of the whole, and at the same time are daily making prodigal waste of the parts. We carelessly throw away thousands and millions of the small fractions of time ; else, in most cases we should have time enough.

So it happens that in the acquisition of knowledge, oft and many a time, the race is not to the swift. Ma-

ny a *wonderful* boy, that confided altogether in the native force of his genius, has been left far behind his contemporaries of smaller talent, but of unwearyed assiduity. Nor does history scarcely record the single instance of a man truly great in point of knowledge, who did not diligently improve even the small fractions of his time. In short, with the exception of a few remarkable cases, much more is effected by the dint of application than by the dint of genius. The fabled mouse with unweariable diligence ate in twain the cable, which a giant could not have parted by main strength. And besides, if it be of great value to know how to bear tedious moments with fortitude and patience, it is of still greater value to be able to prevent their being tedious; which can be accomplished only by turning them to good account, through assiduous diligence in proper and useful pursuits.

Nor is the apocryphal text that I am commenting upon, of less pertinent application to the interesting subjects of economy and morals.

It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. Most estates have been acquired by little and little; by regular and well-applied industry; by small savings; and by a prudent care against waste in even the smallest matters. By these means, in a long series of years, estates have grown up to such a magnitude as the owners themselves would be puzzled to account for. They had met with nothing that could be termed *great good luck*. The wheel of fortune never turned them out a lottery prize, neither did they ever gather a single sheaf from the field of speculation; and they themselves can hardly see, how their estates have waxed so large. The truth of it however is, that small annual savings, so judiciously managed as to be made constantly productive, will, in the space of half a cen-

tury, count up to the magnitude of considerable wealth. On the contrary, many of the estates that are spent, chiefly leak out in small streamlets. The heirs, or owners, are neither stained with gross vices, nor chargeable with wanton prodigality. But small things they have contemned, or at least neglected. And what from lack of industry, or the misapplication of it, and what from incessant little wastes, in-door and out, their all is gone at length, and they look about them, deeply wondering how the catastrophe hath happened.

Turn we now to the consideration of Morals :—and here, also, our text holds true. No man scarcely commits a crime of the blackest grain till he hath ripened himself for it by degrees. It is by little and little, he plunges into the depths of turpitude. He begins with contemning small things ; with disregarding the minor points in the code of morality : and, step by step, he advances, till at length he becomes capable of crimes, of which the bare thought would have struck him with horror at his first outset.

*Here*, a youth of natural likeliness consorts with the idle and dissipated ; not because he feels any hankering for the intoxicating cup, but because he loves sport and jollity. Presently, however, his moral nature is deteriorated. By imperceptible degrees he slides into intemperance, profanity, lewdness, deep-gaming ; and turns out at last either a desperate villain, or a lumpish sot.

*There*, a youth of good parts, of considerable learning, and possessed of pleasing social qualities,—is seen, nevertheless, from his very cradle, to trespass often, in the small way, against truth and integrity. He begins with petty falsehoods and petty frauds ; mere childish or juvenile rougery, which the doting parent interprets for a mark of sprightly genius, rather than the incep-

tive blossom of foul corruption. Unchecked in childhood, and perhaps flattered in his art and cunning; as he advances in age his genius takes a wider range. By little and little he proceeds on, till after no long while, he adventures upon great things, and is arraigned before the bar of justice as a perjurer, a swindler, a forger, or a thief.

In short, were all the tenants of our state prisons to publish a true and full account of themselves, it would be found, for the most part, that puerile immoralities tolerated and encouraged, were the seeds which had ripened into so fearful a crop.

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## NUMBER CXVI.

### *Of Cutting the Coat to the Cloth.*

CERVANTES, in his inimitable *Don Quixotte*, finely ridicules the custom of larding conversation and writings with proverbs or old sayings, by his dealing them out, whole dozens in a string, from the simple lips of *Sancho*. Moreover, the polished *Chesterfield* is known to have warned his son against this species of vulgarity, as well as against all *unfashionable vice*. But notwithstanding these high authorities, there is a great deal of pith in some old sayings; for, in fewest words, they convey the lessons of sound experience.

Of adages of this sort, few have a more extensive, or a more useful meaning, than the one which here follows:—“*Cut your coat to your cloth.*”

The literal sense, nobody can mistake, and nobody’s general practice is wide from it. But its metaphorical sense is daily contravened in the practice of no incon-

siderable part of the sons and daughters of the giddy race of Adam, and more especially in the present age; and in this so highly favoured country of ours. Nor is any single frailty abounding among us, of more mischievous consequence, than the perverse effort to enlarge the coat beyond what the cloth will allow. Thousands, and many thousands, are the hapless victims of this prevailing folly. Thousands, and many thousands, at this very moment, are in poverty and straits, pining, and perhaps repining, who might have been at their ease, had they always minded to cut the coat according to the measure of their cloth. And though what is past admits of no remedy, yet it may be made to have a salutary bearing upon things to come ; since hardly any thing has a more direct tendency to make us prudent, than the imprudences of which we sorely feel the smart.

Be it so ! And then, a great many even of those who are now grieving that their all of earthly substance is lost, will yet, by God's blessing, restore themselves to a competence, and smile in the sunshine of contentment.

It has been remarked by a writer of other times, that " he who is ignorant of the art of arithmetic is but half a man." Meaning that one who goes on with his affairs at random, or without calculation, must needs conduct them ill, whatever be his natural talents or capacity.

We are told of a noble *Venetian*, who ordered his steward to deal out to his extravagant son no more money than what he should count when he received it ; and that the prodigal youngster, having been used to nothing but the pursuit of his pleasures, was led, by the labour of counting his money, to reflect upon the labour it cost his father to get it, and thence was indu-

ced to retrench his expenses and alter his manner of life.

In like manner, only a little attention to arithmetic, as respects apportioning the size of the coat to the measure of the cloth, might save from ruin many a goodly young man, and many an estimable family, of the present generation.

“It is seldom seen,” observes the great Locke, “that he who keeps an account of his income and expenses, and thereby has constantly under view the course of his domestic affairs, lets them run to ruin ; and it is not to be doubted but many a man gets behindhand before he is aware, for want of this care or the skill to do it.”

The arithmetic that is here recommended is by no means complex or puzzling, but is plain, and level to every common understanding. Therein the only question to be asked and solved is, *Can I afford it?* No matter that the thing is cheap. No matter that this is comfortable, and *that* is fashionable ; no matter that such a style of living is most respectable in the eye of the world. Before you purchase the one, or go into the other, ask yourself the simple question, whether you can afford it, and let the true answer be the regulator of your expenses ; else your circumstances will soon be ruined past all hope.

With all those, in short, whose utmost means of living are small and scanty, resolute abstinence from all extraordinary expense, rigid frugality, and even parsimony, along with well-directed industry, so far from marks of meanness, are noble virtues.

There are yet some other respects in which the sage advice, to cut the coat to the cloth, is to be carefully heeded : of these I shall now mention only one, namely, the effort, more especially in early life, to build up

the fabric of reputation too high and magnificent for its basis.

This is an error of no uncommon occurrence. The youth of forward parts and feeling, is in haste to acquire fame, and neglects no opportunities of self-display.—His own indiscretion in this respect, is seconded by that of his friends, who, by means of extravagant encomiums on his parts and genius, puff him into notice.—Thus is he made to enter upon the theatre of life, with a reputation impossible for him to sustain. He is like a trader, who attracts, and disappoints, by exhibiting to view the whole of his goods in the shop-window. His stores are all seen at once. They dazzle at first view, and expectation stands a tip-toe. To unfounded expectation disappointment succeeds of course, and he sinks as far below his true level perhaps, as these adventitious circumstances had raised him above it. Better, far better had it been for him, if his coat had been cut to his cloth.

One should beware of taking upon credit a greater amount, not only of money, but of *reputation*, than one will be able to make good. In the last respect, as well as the other, it is a dangerous experiment for a young man to pass himself for more than he is worth.

On the contrary, there is no less truth than beauty in the following lines of the poet.

“ I have learn'd to fear,  
The blossom that is early, and its leaves,  
Too soon exposed to the chilling spring,  
But much I hope from the more modest bud,  
That hides its head, and gathers secret strength,  
Scarce blown at midsummer.”\*

\* Sir Thomas Moore.

## NUMBER CXVII.

*A solemn monition.*

" Ill habits gather by unseen degrees ;  
As brooks run rivers, rivers swell to seas."

DRYDEN.

UPON the face of our country, in most other respects so free and happy, there are two *Plague-spots*, of awful magnitude, and of mortal aspect: the one is the involuntary slavery of so large a portion of its population; and the other, the voluntary and chosen slavery of numberless multitudes, to the all-destroying power of strong drink. How wide is this deadly evil spread! How immensely numerous, how deplorably wretched, are its victims!

Among this vast group of *miserables*, are to be found many, of opulent parentage; many, who did once inherit wealth themselves; many, who once were respectable and respected; many, who once were distinguished for industry, economy and thrift; many, who once were bright in intellect and possessed of amiable qualities of heart; many, that once had a delicate sense of honour and a nobleness of sentiment; many, who once had felt, and deeply felt, the endearing ties of relationship—whose company had given daily delight to parents, brothers, sisters, wifes and children; many, who had been the hope and pride of their kindred, the ornaments of society—till the cup of abomination poisoned them, soul and body.

Now, they are as lazy as poor; now, their once comely visages are changed to disgusting and hideous; now, their bodies are debilitated and corrupted; now, every fine and noble feeling is utterly extinguished,

and all sense of honour and shame gone and lost ; now, brutal ferociousness succeeds to the former suavity of temper ; now, natural affections themselves are extinct ; now, the aged and wo-struck parent is wantonly insulted or shamefully neglected and disregarded ; now, the estimable, the once so dearly beloved wife, is assailed with opprobrious language and wounding blows ; now, both wife and children are forsaken,—or even worse,—are made to endure, day and night, the brutality of a drunken husband and father, who, instead of supporting them, is become their fiendlike tormentor.

This picture, so far from overcharged or aggravated, is but a faint copy of the ghastliness of the original.

Our country is invaded, and, in considerable part, already conquered. The enemy has entered every town, almost every village, and is dragging away, year by year, fresh numbers of our citizens into slavery for life ; a slavery worse than Algerine, worse than is anywhere endured by the wretched Africans. This innumerable multitude of doubly, and most deeply fallen men—scattered about over the whole face of our country, are not merely a dead loss to, but a dead weight upon, the general society. And moreover, they are drawing others into the same vortex of perdition ; each being like a mildewed ear of corn, which blasts the ears contiguous to it. Assuredly, then, it behooves that all who have any regard for Religion, or Morals, or Country, should employ their united and assiduous endeavours to stay this plague ere it infect and consume the general mass of the population.

Of the habitual and confirmed drunkards, there seems very little hope of a thorough cure. Somewhere it is related in substance, that a *monkey*, having been accustomed to the taste of strong drink, began to love it ;—

that one day watching his opportunity, he helped himself, and drank so freely, that he became sick and dizzy, and fell into the fire and burnt his foot, and that never after, though repeatedly urged, could he be prevailed with to drink so much as a single drop.

Would that, in similar cases the like prudence were found in *Man!*—*He*, on the contrary, the more he experiences the effects of the raging poison, is the more bewitched after it. Though it makes him dizzy and sick, loathsome and self-loathed, and occasions him much worse bodily ills than befel the monkey; yet all this but increases the greediness of his desire, and strengthens the chains of his bondage. One, of very many, masters the habit after it is become inveterate, and thereby entitles himself to no small degree of honour. With some others, there is, all their days, a struggle between moral feeling and appetite. They sometimes *scotch* the snake, but never *kill* it. Their condition is like that of the fabled Sisyphus, condemned to the fruitless toil of rolling up a steep hill, a heavy stone, which, ere he gets it to the top, ever comes tumbling back, and compels him to begin his labour anew.—But, as to the general mass of drunkards, such a marvellous stupefaction befalls them, that they seem to quite lose all moral sense, and all regard to consequences:—they are of the hospital of *incurables*.

In no wise is it to be expected that very many of those who are become real drunkards will ever reform: yet, where the habit is not fixed and inveterate, to master it is comparatively easy.

If you are but just beginning to form this most pernicious of habits, Pause! for heaven's sake, Pause!

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“ The hour's now come;  
This very minute bids thee ope thine ear,  
Obey, and be attentive.”\*

\* Shakespeare

See the pit lying before you. It is naked ; it hath no covering, one step further, and you are engulphed, and forever lost. While it is yet in your power, dash from your lips the cup of intemperance.

“ For in the wreath that decks the flowing bowl,  
Fell adders hiss, and poisoned serpents roll.”

What ! Though *young*, do you need stimulants already ? I heartily pity the poverty of your spirits. Assuredly, the *young*, should have enough of that commodity—enough of genuine, unsophisticated, animal spirits, *of their own*. If a *young* man, now needs stimulants to make him cheerful and lively, what a lifeless lump, what a mere inanimate clod, must he be, when his youth is departed ? And besides ; he that requires daily doses of strong drink in the season of youth, is almost sure to be a drunkard at middle age.—Perhaps you may think you are in very little danger yet, or in none at all.—And so thought tens and hundreds of thousands before you, till they were inextricably involved in the awful snare.

It is one, of long experience, who addresseth you. The hand now writing is withered with age, and must soon be mouldering in the dust.

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## NUMBER CXVIII.

### *The Conclusion.*

THE series of the Brief Remarker has been eked out to an unexpected and hazardous length, and if it have not occasioned weariness already, many thanks are due to the patience and candor of its readers. For the few remaining observations that will close it there

is felt a more particular need of indulgence from the same quarter, since, on no topic is it more difficult to speak properly, than on one involving a strain of self-notice.

The multifarious subjects which I have presumed to touch upon in these compendious essays, though, for the most part, of minor importance compared with some others, are nevertheless, of no inconsiderable interest. Little things, sometimes have great consequences. A small leak unheeded, may be the means of sinking a great ship. A trivial wound, neglected and irritated, brings down to the grave a hale and healthy body. So in economics ; it is often by neglects and wastes in littles, that estates run out, and frightful poverty overtakes its unconscious victims by imperceptible approaches. And so also in regard to morals ; petty trespasses open the way to dark and atrocious crimes. Both good and bad habits, are formed, not unfrequently, by adventitious circumstances seemingly trifling in themselves. The impressions, and the bent, received in infancy and childhood, go far toward forming the character of manhood. The natural temper of the young mind is turned, at least in many instances, to humane or ferocious, accordingly as it happens to fall into skilful and kindly, or unskilled and barbarous hands. By administering corrosives too freely and too frequently on the one hand, and by excessive habitual indulgence on the other, the natural temper of childhood, though of ordinary mildness, gets to be more and violent, or peevish and restless, in the following periods of age.

Indeed numerous particulars might be adduced to show, what intimate and powerful influences certain inconsiderable circumstances, and incidents seemingly trivial, often have, in the production of weal or woe to

human life. So that he who sets himself to point out and describe the comparatively small things, pertaining, whether to Economy, Morals, Education, or whatever else that is interesting to humanity, may be considerably useful in this way. And besides, the haberdasher, or the dealer in small wares, usually accommodates a greater number of customers, than the wholesale trader, who disposes of his goods only by the piece and the package.

It is interesting to learn the properties of inanimate nature, and still more interesting is it, in some respects, to know the natures of several kinds of the animals below us ; but, after all, the knowledge of the human kind, is that which is by far the most interesting to man. Nor should honest, though feeble efforts, to inculcate and spread abroad even the minor branches of this precious species of knowledge, be regarded as futile and useless.

The venerable sanctity of the *Pulpit*, seems hardly to comport with minute details of the various nameable follies and frailties which are found in society, or with direct and particular efforts to remedy them. To that, and to writers purely theological, belongs especially the more solemn and weighty task, of pointing out the fatal ailment of our general nature and its only remedy, and of explaining and inculcating the sublime doctrines, the cardinal virtues, and the all-important duties of our holy religion—aiming their shafts against *Sin*, rather than at human weaknesses and frailties. Yet a useful subsidiary is found in him, who properly descants on the minutenesses of human character and concerns. Neither is his undertaking the less difficult of performance, by reason that his subjects are of inferior magnitude ; it requiring quite as close inspection to dissect the wings of a butterfly, as the bones of

a mammoth. Moreover, subjects most deeply interesting, will naturally excite attention by their own intrinsic interest; whereas those of less importance, require more dexterity of manner to recommend them to attentive notice.

“ To catch the manners living as they rise ; to hold as it were the mirror up to nature ;”—or, in other words, nicely to delineate qualities, affections, and passions, in the various shades of difference in which they show themselves in different individuals—is a work that requires the hand of a master ; of which very few are fully capable, and to which I make not the least pretensions—nor indeed to any thing beyond good plain sense, considerable reading, long experience, and attentive observation. If vain, I am not so vain, as to pretend to vie with shining talents, or to rival the honours of genius.

The most celebrated writers on life and manners, whose works of this sort have immortalized their names, have written in a tone almost exclusively adapted to the upper ranks of society, or else to those versed in learned lore, and, of course, are very little accommodable to the circumstances, habitudes, and interests, of the great commonalty. On the contrary, in these essays, I have proposed to myself the humbler, but yet more extensively useful object, of philosophizing as it were on the common concerns of mankind—on the ordinary affairs of life. And in pursuance of this object, I have aimed at conveying my thoughts in fewest words, and in terms intelligible alike to all—by condensation, to crowd much matter of general use, into the smallest compass, and rather to draw the attention of the reader to the subjects discussed, than to discuss them fully myself. My feeble endeavours are not lost, provided they have added aught on Prudence and Virtue’s side, even though but as a single grain in the balance.

A more gravely logical manner, might perhaps have better suited some readers, and certainly would have been much the easier way ; but, in my opinion, the various advice and dehortation, which it was my aim to impress upon the mind of community at large, would find a readier access to that mind through the manner I have chosen. If, however, my remarks or manner, are at all chargeable with empty levity or frivolity ; so far from pertinaciously justifying such unintentional trespasses, I would heartily thank the monitor who should point them out to me fairly, and with brotherly feelings.

If the arrogance of dogmatism has seemingly betrayed itself occasionally in these essays, most assuredly it was undesigned. The Brief Remarker has too abundant cause of consciousness, not only of the fallibility, but of the general infirmity, of his own understanding and judgment, to presume at imposing his dogmas upon others, farther than they are clearly proveable by experience and sound reason.

Every reading and thinking man who has lived long in the world, would, in many instances, be unable to determine whether the expressions he uses be strictly his own, or borrowed from the stores of others. In the series of the Brief Remarker there have been distinguished, in one way or another, such passages, sentences, and expressions, as were known to the writer to be borrowed ; and yet sundry others, perhaps, may rightfully belong to the same class. Nor is it very material : if viands are but palatable and wholesome, all the rest, relating, whether to the provider or the cook, is of much less consequence to the guests.

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BJ

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